# The Guardian Weekly

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## Britain to squeeze student numbers

John Carvel

TENS of thousands of qualified students in Britain face being turned away from university because the Government thinks it will not be profitable to spend public money on educating them for dead-end jobs or relatively lowly careers.

Ministers have told Sir Ron Dearing's committee of inquiry on the future of higher education that the supply of graduates is likely to outstrip the economy's demand for them within the next three years. They are warning that increasing numbers of young people who obtain two A levels or equivalent vocational qualifications can no longer regard them as an almost automatic passport to university.

"There is a limit to how many extra graduates the economy can absorb before the increased productivity they generate starts to decline," said the Department for Education and Employment in evidence quietly placed in the House of Commons library last week.

In the financial services sector, graduates were already starting to fill clerical and sales jobs which did not need their level of academic attainment. "The Government would be concerned if a trend towards recruiting graduates to unmodified, low-level posts developed," the department said. "So long as higher education is funded from the public purse, the projected rate of return to the nation's investment should be a major factor in determining the appropriate size of initial full-time higher education."

The evidence challenges a central tenet of previous policy on higher education, which assumed the universities would continue to grow to produce a highly qualified workforce capable of matching international competition. It also runs counter to the thrust of President Clinton's "national crusade for education", which formed the cornerstone to his State of the Union address to Congress last week *(see page 6)*.

The Confederation of British Industry has consistently demanded that the proportion of young people going into higher education should increase from the current rate of 30 per cent to 40 per cent or more.

The department estimates that by the turn of the century, 38 per cent of young people aged 18 to 21 will have both the qualifications and desire to embark on an undergraduate course. This would increase the number of students from 900,000 to about 1.1 million within seven years.

The Government has warned Sir Ron that there would not be enough "graduate" jobs to absorb these students without an unacceptable reduction on its rate of return on its investment in higher education — currently 7 to 9 per cent.

The evidence concluded: "There can be no assumption that higher education's share of the total education budget from public funds will increase or can even in the medium term be sustained at its present level of over 20 per cent of the education budget."

The evidence came as a bombshell for British vice-chancellors already struggling to run universities after a 36 per cent cut in funding per student over the past 10 years. It increased the probability that the next government would introduce tuition fees as an alternative way of meeting demand for university places without increasing public spending.

Ministers and their Labour counterparts are keeping quiet about this option before the election and the Prime Minister, John Major, is understood to be concerned that fees would offend principles of equality of opportunity.

Officials at the DfEE were embarrassed that evidence to what they regard as the most important inquiry in the department's history had been quietly placed in the Commons library without any comment being available from Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary.

**Martin Woollacott, page 15**



Street fury . . . A demonstrator vents his anger on a riot policeman in Vlore on Monday PHOTO: ARMANDO BABANI

## Two die as Albania boils over

Joanna Robertson in Vlore

THE Albanian prime minister, Alexander Meksi, asked parliament to introduce a state of emergency in the southern port of Vlore after another two protesters died in violent clashes with riot police on Monday.

Two people died of gunshot wounds and one man died of heart failure the previous night, the director of Vlore hospital said. There were 84 wounded in the wards, 25 seriously.

In his address to the chamber, dominated by supporters of Albania's rightwing president, Sali Berisha, Mr Meksi denounced rioting in the town as "violent actions of terrorist groups".

Protesters and more than 1,000 riot police took their battle to the rooftops of Vlore's tatty concrete blocks. Police opened fire on demonstrators as the two sides hurled stones at each other.

Protesters drove back police in the main square where they had gathered peacefully for five days to denounce Mr Berisha and demand the return of savings lost in collapsed pyramid investment schemes.

Demonstrators dragged wrecked cars and oil drums to the police station, erected barricades and set them alight. They captured several riot police, stripped them naked and burned their uniforms. Many police suffered the additional indignity of being rescued from the demonstrators in their underwear.

About 30 police crouching behind plastic shields endured an onslaught of stones and then tables and chairs dropped from a terrace.

Crowds shouted "Vlore will never be defeated" and called the president a thief. Elderly men and women smashed up paving stones by the side of the road to keep younger demonstrators supplied with ammunition.

Most of the population of Vlore lost their life savings in the Gjallica investment company which crashed last week. Many had invested all the money they had earned from working in Italy.

They say they will continue to protest until the government resigns.

**Pyramids of despair, page 16**
**Le Monde, page 17**

## Ecuador survives a week of craziness

Monte Hayes of AP in Quito and Phil Gunson

ECUADOR emerged peacefully on Monday from nearly a week of constitutional chaos after President Abdalá Bucaram — known as El Loco, or "the crazy one" — was dismissed by Congress for "mental incapacity" but refused to step down.

For a few days the small Andean nation appeared to have three rival governments — with the president, vice-president and leader of Congress all claiming to be in charge — until the army stepped in to restore constitutional propriety.

Brought in temporarily to quell the crisis caused by Mr Bucaram's dismissal, the vice-president, Rosalia Arteaga, nearly caused another by suggesting she might not step down as planned.

Ms Arteaga, promoted last Sunday from vice-president to become the country's first woman leader, created new turmoil by insisting she would not leave office until the country's constitution was amended. In the end she agreed to adhere to the military-backed plan for her to step down when Congress names a new chief executive. That could happen as early as Tuesday, when the legislature was due to meet.

Congress ousted Ecuador's flamboyant president on Thursday last week by 44 votes to 34, accusing him of corruption, nepotism and embarrassing behaviour during his six months in office. The vote followed a month of violent street protests against Mr Bucaram, whose austerity measures sharply raised the cost of living. His dismissal was preceded by a 48-hour nationwide labour strike.

Initially, Mr Bucaram refused to quit the presidential palace, but fled to his home in the port of Guayaquil when the commander of the seventh military region, General José Grijalva, announced that the armed forces had decided not to take orders from Mr Bucaram, "since he is no longer in office, having been deposed by the national congress".

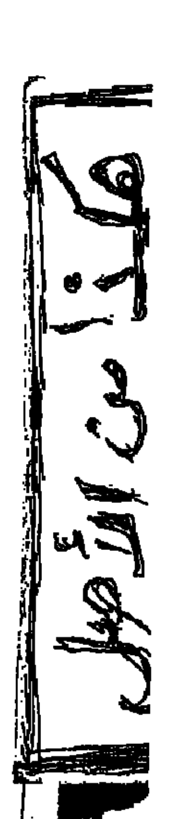
Early last Sunday morning, Ms Arteaga was recognised by Congress as the interim president, after its first choice, parliamentary leader Fabián Alarcón, agreed to step down.

Meanwhile Mr Bucaram warned: "Ecuador is going to be a disaster. And I can assure you that the people will ask me to return in a month and a half."

Although he took office less than a year ago, the lawyer and populist, aged 44, had squandered support by erratic behaviour that earned him his nickname and by economic measures that hugely increased the cost of living.




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| Finland | FM 10 | Portugal | E300 |
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| Germany | DM 4 | Spain | P 300 |
| Greece | DR 450 | Sweden | SK 19 |
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# A fertile discussion about space and babies

*CONGRATULATIONS* to Catherine Bennett (Suffer the children, February 9) for making her plea for more space and fewer babies. A high birthrate was necessary when the mortality rate was higher. Today it spells disaster for the environment. It is natural for women to want children, but would it not be better if fertility clinics were replaced by adoption agencies? There are enough motherless infants in the world to satisfy would-be-mothers.
*John Beloff,*
*Edinburgh*

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*CATHERINE BENNETT'S* cynicism leads her astray. Few parents would take "complacent pleasure" in "stories of frustrated child-bearing", and anyone who has witnessed the pitiful *égoïsme à deux* of so many childless couples would scarcely regard them as "models of civic responsibility".

Children are not commodities to be valued or rejected according to considerations of quality, quantity or convenience.
*(Dr) Margaret Maison,*
*Swanage, Dorset*

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*WHAT* criteria does Catherine Bennett use to assert that Britain is overcrowded? The definition of the space human beings need is bound to be relative. Not all babies in the UK are born in council estates with poor recreational facilities. Space is not necessarily the problem. The problem is the unwillingness of some adults to share it.
*Judicaelle Thise,*
*College of Europe, Bruges, Belgium*

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*ALTHOUGH* it must be difficult for infertile couples to listen to arguments that Britain (and the world) does not need more children, they could help to reduce psychological pressure on the childless.

The family-values proponents would have you believe that parenthood is all-important; in today's world, it is a course of action that carries enormous responsibility, which many adults clearly cannot meet. Isn't it about time we acknowledged this and stopped putting parenthood on a pedestal?
*Y S Fyfe,*
*Easter Compton, Bristol*

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*IF CHILDREN* are suffering as a result of both parents working full-time, why is the finger being pointed only at women (Working mums blamed for children's failures, February 9)? Because, despite years of legislative reforms and campaigning, child-rearing remains the sole responsibility of women. Women are entertained in the workplace so long as they are childless, but when motherhood arrives, the prevailing view is that they should be consigned to low-status and low-paid part-time jobs, or to the home.

We should be considering the following policies: more flexible working for both parents; more part-time working by men and the final realisation of equal pay for women so that it is not always women — as the lower wage earner — who has to make sacrifices; and the development of employment practices that mean career advancement does not stop for part-time workers.
*Clare McGlynn,*
*University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle*



## A hunger for freedom

*IT IS* an outrage that asylum-seekers should be detained in prisons alongside convicted criminals as highlighted by the hunger strikers at HMP Rochester (Hunger strikers close to death, February 9).

Asylum-seekers are undergoing a second exile in this country, starkly outlined in a recent report on the mental health implications of asylum-seekers in the UK. Funded by the Barrow Cadbury Trust and North Birmingham Mental Health Trust, it examined a number of asylum-seekers in detention. It was found that they had been held, on average, for eight months. Of this group, 27 per cent had a history of torture, 33 per cent of detention and 33 per cent of bereavement.

Upon medical assessments, nine out of the 15 were released and six went on to receive exceptional leave to remain or full refugee status, contradicting government statements that persons likely to receive asylum are released. The report concluded that medical provision for detainees is unsatisfactory. The policy of detention is purposely harsh, to act as a deterrent to potential asylum-seekers.
*Vijay Singh Riyait,*
*Gateshead*

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*THE* hunger strike coincides with the criminalisation of anyone who employs an illegal immigrant. Both are symptoms of a hidden agenda of racial discrimination embodied in UK immigration law which reached new depths of inhumanity in the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, with its withdrawal of social security benefits from significant categories of asylum-seekers.

In the case of immigration, the law institutionalises racial prejudice and undermines the status and security of black and Asian communities in Britain. It also deprives asylum-seekers and holders of several categories of British citizenship of rights guaranteed by UN and European conventions on human rights and on the status of refugees. The only way to right these wrongs is a radical reform of legislation.
*Chas Raws,*
*Christian Action for Justice in Immigration Law, Glasgow*

## Don't put profit before people

*THE* Australian government is in a dilemma with the European Union over the latter's human rights clause in bilateral trade agreements. It is, however, no dilemma for the Australian people. As with our European colleagues we enjoy the host of religious, civil and political human rights, including generous labour conditions, which are essentially a part of our shared liberal democratic traditions.

We are appalled, but not surprised, that our government wants to deny its international responsibilities concerning the oppressed and the abused of the world by separating human rights from trade negotiations. There appears to be very little that can change this view of the Australian government, which has much in common with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (Asean). Even the first Australians, the Aboriginal people, have met with the same mean-fisted sentiments over "reconciliation." They continue to live in parts of Australia in Third World conditions.

It may be argued that Australia lost the vote in October 1996 for the non-permanent member's seat in the United Nations Security Council because of the perception by UN members that ambivalence and duplicity by any member in the face of universal human rights is totally unacceptable. Now with a new impasse with the EU it is as if the Australian government has learnt nothing from this episode.

As spokesperson for the human rights groups Humanity First and Australians for a Free East Timor I applaud the EU in its dedication to human rights and appeal for steadfastness and vigilance to secure a world where human rights are the first and final factor in national and international relations.
*Jim Aubrey,*
*University of Melbourne, Australia*

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*AUSTRALIA* should be celebrating the recent decision by its High Court on native title. The judges ruled that pastoral leases do not necessarily extinguish the native title rights of indigenous Australians. This gives us the chance to move a step closer to becoming a mature, just nation.

Finally, the colonising legal system is beginning to acknowledge what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been saying for more than 200 years: they owned the land before we arrived and they have never given up those rights.

We should be negotiating a comprehensive and just settlement with indigenous Australians. It needs to provide for land use agreements that protect both indigenous peoples' cultural and economic rights and miners' and farmers' business interests. It also needs to provide land rights and compensation for the majority of indigenous Australians who cannot benefit from native title claims because they were forcibly moved off their lands, or whose stolen lands are now occupied by others under freehold title.
*Matt Davies,*
*Manuka, ACT, Australia*

## Fruitless return to family roots

*MAY I* add a footnote to Annick Cojean's account of the disputes in Teltow, outside Berlin (Trouble brewing on the home front, February 2)? In 1943 my parents "sold" their house on the outskirts of Budapest to an Aryan family. My parents always said that they received no payment, but were told that if they agreed to "sell", they would be allowed to remove their furniture and possessions.

I found the house in 1991. A man scratching around in the front garden grew suspicious. He demanded to know what I wanted. When I mentioned my name, it obviously rang alarm bells. He began pleading with me: his parents had bought the house in good faith. I tried to reassure him, in broken Hungarian, that I had no intention of making any claim against his family. I don't think he believed me. To this day I am haunted by the thought of the anguish that my sentimental attempt to search for the past had caused these people who were as innocent as I am of the terrible things that happened there.
*Andrew Riemer,*
*Mossman, NSW, Australia*

## Briefly

"*PEOPLE* like Mladic, Karadzic, Arkan or Seselj" (where's Milosevic?) will probably never be put in the dock for war crimes "because the international community regards such an operation as too risky" (Genocide waits for its day in court, January 26). What international community? Certainly not the international community of ordinary people, who would undoubtedly like to see justice done to those responsible for the wars which spawn war crimes.

What is meant, surely, is the international club of politicians, and the arms merchants they serve so staunchly at such a price to humanity and its future. What is risky for them is the precedent that might put in the dock future Reagans and Bushes (Nicaragua, etc), Thatchers (the Belgrano) and, even more unthinkable, the likes of British Aerospace and the vendors of anti-personnel mines. Show trials of token thugs are futile while the biggest criminals have nothing to fear.
*Paul Winstanley,*
*Palmerston North, New Zealand*

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*IT WAS* surprising to learn from Owen Bowcott (December 22) that the United States ejected the Spanish from the Philippines in 1898.

Although they captured Manila — slamming the gates in the faces of their then allies, the Filipinos — it was the latter who drove out the Spanish from the rest of their country by their own efforts, declaring independence on June 12, 1898.
*John Orford,*
*Balingasa, Philippines*

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*MAY I* take this opportunity to congratulate David Rose on his review of A Sivanandan's When Memory Dies (January 19). However, Rose ends his review of the book with the chilling words: "The squandering of this legacy is a crime that cannot be forgiven."

Surely this should have ended "The squandering of this legacy is a crime that cannot be forgotten but must be forgiven." Bloody conflicts of this kind can only be resolved, in the long term, by reconciliation.
*J H Jessop,*
*Ostrolcka, Poland*

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*I REALISE* how difficult it must be for you English journalists to sort out all the pretentious geopolitical and postal designations insisted upon by those boring old colonies but I was none the less a bit taken aback to see a letter (February 2) purportedly from Susan Tonkin, Curtih, ACT, Canada.

The Australian Capital Territory is some considerable distance from Canada, and Australia did have a prime minister named John Curtin.
*Ron Haggart,*
*Toronto, Canada*

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# Muslim riots shake China

**Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong and David Hearst in Moscow**

A SPASM of anti-Chinese unrest has convulsed a mainly Muslim region in the far west of China, with at least 10 people killed in rioting that left streets scattered with flaming vehicles and, according to one account, burnt corpses.

The town of Yining, near the border with Kazakhstan, has been placed under curfew and sealed off from the rest of Xinjiang, a vast region of deserts and mountains in the heart of Central Asia where China tests its nuclear weapons. Some reports spoke of many more casualties. Accounts vary on the trigger for last week's turmoil, the most serious in the region since a 1990 rebellion that led China to deploy tens of thousands more security personnel in Xinjiang.

China has tried to conquer the region for centuries and has never entirely pacified a population dominated by Uighurs, a predominantly Muslim Turkic people who claim to have handed the conquering armies of Alexander the Great their first defeat in the fourth century BC.

State-controlled Chinese television in an area long bedevilled by a volatile mix of Islam and Uighur nationalism reported on Monday that a "riot" had been quelled. It said "splittists" had used religion to stir up "misinformed masses", but gave no details.

Yining, the epicentre of the ethnic unrest, was the capital of a short-lived East Turkestan Republic half a century ago, and has become a major Central Asian crossroads following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Trade, guns, political ferment and Islam pour across what was once a tightly sealed border.

A report in the Hong Kong newspaper Ming Pao blamed the rioting on radical Islamic teenagers. But exiled Uighur activists with extensive contacts in the area deny Chinese claims of Islamic fundamentalism.

"China has turned eastern Turkestan into a timebomb," said Erkin Alptekin, an exiled Uighur whose late father is revered in parts of Xinjiang as a nationalist hero. "Instead of defusing tensions by listening to people, they are constantly looking for confrontation. The moment you open your mouth you are a splittist and a fundamentalist. China is very clever. It knows the West is scared of fundamentalism."

Ethnic Chinese account for about 6 million of a population of 16 million in what is nominally an autonomous region but in reality enjoys less autonomy than most ordinary provinces.

When Mao Zedong came to power in 1949, only 300,000 ethnic Chinese lived in Xinjiang. Most of the region's Uighur leaders perished in a mysterious plane crash on their way to Beijing to negotiate with Mao soon after the revolution.

Uighur nationalists based in former Soviet Central Asia claimed that the execution of three ethnic Uighurs sparked last week's riots. A spokesman for the United National Revolutionary Front of East Turkestan said the men were arrested early last year during a Chinese "anti-splittist" crackdown.

A member of the Peruvian forces feels the heat outside the Japanese embassy in Lima where 72 hostages have been held since December 17. Face-to-face talks between the rebels and the government were due to be held on Tuesday in a bid to end the siege PHOTO: SILVIA IZQUIERDO

# Milosevic's battlefield shifts to maintain media control

**Julian Borger in Belgrade**

SERBIA'S President Slobodan Milosevic bowed to street protests and international pressure last week by issuing instructions for the government's surrender of power in cities won by the opposition in the local elections last November.

But having given ground on the control of city councils, the president is falling back on his next line of defence — the media — to buttress his regime. It is becoming the new battlefield in his struggle for political survival against an opposition campaign of popular street protests.

Opposition leaders hailed the climbdown as a turning point in their battle of wits with the weakened Mr Milosevic, but vowed to continue the protests until they had access to the state-controlled media and until government officials were punished for vote-rigging.

Journalists at a privately owned station in Belgrade, BK television, were trying to fight off a threat to close down their transmitters last week. Executives of the state broadcasting corporation, RTS, claimed that BK had not paid its broadcasting fees.

The RTS executives arrived at BK's offices just hours before it was announced that Mr Milosevic would recognise the opposition's victories. A law to that effect was sent to the parliament and was due to be considered this week.

The timing of the RTS visit was not lost on BK's news editor, Srdjan Djuric. He denied that BK owed money to RTS, and argued that it was being picked on because it broadcast coverage of the protests.

The pressure on BK, he said, was a sign that President Milosevic had adopted a new tactic to retain his monopoly of power.

"I fear that when this whole election crisis is over, the time will come for a settling of accounts against all those he believes were not with him," Mr Djuric said. "What is certain is that he is going to fight for complete media control."

Control of municipal councils has a strategic importance because it confers control of local radio and television stations. Media control is likely to be crucial in this year's presidential and parliamentary elections.

The importance of the regime's near-monopoly of the media has been vividly demonstrated: for the first month of the protests, many rural Serbs were unaware of the turmoil in the cities. The battle is not limited to radio and television; the state-owned newsagent has nearly doubled its distribution charges, putting a financial squeeze on independent newspapers and magazines.

**President's henchmen, page 8**

# Netanyahu bans talk of Lebanon pullout

**Shyam Bhatia and Reuter in Jerusalem**

ISRAEL'S prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, called last weekend for an end to growing public debate on a unilateral troop withdrawal from south Lebanon, saying such talk could encourage attacks on Israeli soldiers.

He was speaking hours after seven Israeli soldiers were wounded in a clash with Hizbullah guerrillas in the Israeli-occupied zone of south Lebanon. On Tuesday last week 73 Israeli troops heading for the zone were killed when the two helicopters they were travelling in collided.

"This talk, during days of mourning and emotional upheaval, might encourage the terrorists in Lebanon to step up their attacks on Israeli soldiers," a spokesman for Mr Netanyahu said.

"The prime minister calls on all members of parliament and public officials to stop dealing at this time with the possibility of unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon."

He was reacting to an unprecedented bipartisan proposal from 10 MPs for a unilateral withdrawal of Israeli troops from the self-declared security zone. The campaign is led by Gideon Ezra, a former deputy chief of the Shin Bet intelligence service and a leading member of the ruling rightwing Likud party.

Israel's army and intelligence communities strongly oppose any talk of a unilateral withdrawal, believing it will endanger Israeli towns near the Lebanese border.

Mr Ezra's decision to break ranks is seen as a significant turning point in the debate about Lebanon. He is supported by another influential Likud MP, Michael Eitan, and Yossi Beilin, one of the architects of the Oslo peace accords with the Palestinians and a cabinet minister in the former Labour administration.

"We want a fresh look at the situation, untrammelled by the past," Mr Eitan said. "We want the defence establishment to look to the future. We don't want them to avoid considering new options for fear someone will ask them why they didn't think of them before, or accuse them of being responsible for unnecessary casualties."

● Mr Netanyahu and the Palestinian Authority president, Yasser Arafat, met at the Erez border crossing between Gaza and Israel last weekend. They agreed that joint committees would meet within a week to resolve issues outstanding after their recent agreement on Hebron, which led to 80 per cent of the city switching to Palestinian control. They also discussed Israel's future military redeployments in the West Bank.

## The Week

**A WHITE-MAJORITY jury in Santa Monica, California, found O J Simpson responsible for the deaths of his ex-wife and her friend and ordered him to pay $33.5 million in damages.**
Comment, page 15
Washington Post, page 20

**THE National Front overcame a cross-party campaign of opposition to win control of a fourth municipality in the French town of Vitrolles, near Marseille.**

**A SUPREME court judge was shot dead in Spain and a worker at a military base killed by a bomb in two attacks by the Basque separatist organisation ETA.**

**GENERAL Alexander Korzhakov, Boris Yeltsin's former bodyguard, won a seat in the Russian parliament in the Tula byelection. As a member of the Duma he will gain immunity from prosecution as well as political legitimacy.**

**THE Bolivian government declared a state of national emergency as heavy rains destroyed the homes and crops of thousands of farmers and drowned livestock.**

**SIX thousand U'wa Indians in Colombia, who had threatened to commit mass suicide in protest at plans to explore their ancestral lands for oil, won a court case against the US oil giant Occidental.**

**BULGARIA'S ruling Socialist Party, under intense pressure from a month of street protests, agreed to hold new elections in April.**
Washington Post, page 19

**A MIAMI businessman, Ludwig Fainberg, was facing 30 indictments after being caught for allegedly trying to buy a submarine from Russia for use by a Colombian drug cartel.**

**STEPHEN Anderson, aged 22, who allegedly shot his family at a reunion in the village of Raurimu, New Zealand, appeared in court charged with murder. He entered no plea.**

**A SIKH-HINDU coalition swept to power in the Indian state of Punjab in the first free elections for a decade, routing the ruling Congress party.**

**BRITISH *au pair* Louise Woodward, aged 18, is to be brought before a US court and charged with murder following the death of the nine-month-old baby she was caring for.**

**PAMELA HARRIMAN, the US ambassador to France and political godmother to Bill Clinton, has died aged 76.**
Obituary, page 28

# Algeria slides to 'total war'

**David Hirst in Beirut**

WITH horrific massacres in the countryside and devastating car bombs in the capital, Algeria came to the end of the bloodiest Ramadan since 1962, the height of the war of liberation against France.

Arab commentators warn that with the military-backed regime and the Islamist rebels locked into more absolutist positions than ever, the country seems to be sliding inexorably towards total war and total chaos, with implications for North Africa and Europe.

The barbarous conflict, which has already cost 60,000 lives, is turning into much more than a straight fight to the finish between the extremist tendencies within both camps — hardline generals known as "eradicators" on the one hand, fanatics of the Armed Islamic Groups (GIA) on the other — who dictate its course.

There is increasingly the interplay of three other violent conflicts: within the ruling élite itself, within the Islamist insurrection, and, perhaps most dangerous, within broad segments of society caught up in tribal vendettas and vengeance.

Western intelligence believes 300 people a week have been killed during Ramadan. Rural massacres have grown more numerous and more atrocious. The Medea district south of Algiers is the main killing ground.

Last week the authorities imposed a ban on traffic in Algiers, where car bombs have killed 70.

Just before Ramadan, the prime minister, Ahmed Ouyahia, once again announced that the government had finally crushed the terror. But the GIA leader, Antar Zouabri, vowed to make Ramadan the "month of a hundred bombs". He announced an uncompromising strategy, that of forcing the people to "choose their camp" — his or the regime's. "But for those who are with us", he said, "all the others are apostates and deserve to die." Thus the entire population, even children, became targets in this month of fasting, repentance and forgiveness.

He put the strategy into effect with a series of the deadliest car bombs in five years.

In his embarrassment, President Lamine Zeroual delivered a 20-minute speech of unprecedented vehemence, pledging that "the state will fight the terror groups until their extermination".

As the main struggle continues unabated, the regime itself is falling prey to vicious internal conflicts, as it has always done when some major event is in the offing. A general election is due this year.

In a move that has alarmed the "eradicators", the president is seeking to establish a loyalist party of his own, having formerly insisted he would remain above the political fray. It was to have been led by a trade union leader, Abdul-Haq Benhamouda. He was gunned down in Algiers recently — almost certainly by a faction within the regime.

These internal conflicts have weakened the regime's ability to profit from the far greater chaos within the Islamists' ranks. They are riven by increasingly murderous rivalries, with at least three main factions competing for control and territory.

In Medea, the GIA is trying to terrorise the population into backing it, not only against the regime but against a local rival, the Islamic Front for Armed Jihad, the military wing of the mainstream Djazair tendency within the Islamist camp.

This has apparently prompted desperate local people to form their own self-defence patrols. An anti-Islamist newspaper called it a new phenomenon, the beginning of a spontaneous Intifada against the terror.

But it is not new. The regime itself first encouraged the formation of popular militias, so-called "patriots", now numbering some 200,000 men. They are now the main reason why the civil war is slipping out of the hands of the "official" protagonists. The patriots are a law unto themselves.



**A reveller dressed as a witch uses her broom to vault over a bonfire during traditional Fasnacht (carnival) celebrations last weekend in the German town of Waldkirch** PHOTOGRAPH: WINFRIED ROTHERMEL

# Poll results cow Bhutto

**Suzanne Goldenberg in Islamabad**

**BENAZIR BHUTTO, in disgrace after her party's dismal election performance, last week withdrew her threat to protest at polls which she claimed were rigged against her.**

**The results gave her rival Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League a resounding victory in last week's election, with more than 130 seats in the 217-seat national assembly. It was the most convincing electoral victory since Ms Bhutto's father, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, swept the polls more than 25 years ago.**

**The Bhutto family's Pakistan People's Party was reduced to a humiliating 19 seats. The Mohajir Quami Movement, representing the descendants of those who migrated from India at independence, had around 12 seats. Imran Khan, the cricketer turned anti-corruption crusader, was clean bowled for nought: his Tehreek-e-Insaaf failed to win a single seat.**

**The turnout, according to commentators, was between 30 and 40 per cent of the 56.5 million eligible voters.**

**Ms Bhutto accused the government of manipulating the voters' lists to deny her victory, after her dismissal in November by President Farooq Leghari on disputed charges of mismanagement and corruption. But she said she would not carry out her threat of a national protest campaign.**

**Her PPP has effectively been reduced to a regional party in her native Sindh province, and its followers have little spirit for a fight. "The results were engineered. Despite the fact that we question the legitimacy of the electoral process we need stability," Ms Bhutto said.**

**Although Mr Sharif no longer has to contend with an immediate confrontation with Ms Bhutto, he faces the unenviable task of injecting stability in a country that has seen the dismissal of four elected governments since 1988. He was himself dismissed in 1993 for alleged corruption.**

**Comment, page 15**

# Turkey plans anti-PKK buffer zone

**Owen Bowcott**

TURKEY is considering evacuating a strip of land along its southeastern frontier to prevent terrorist incursions, according to documents obtained in the capital, Ankara.

The 10km-wide buffer zone should be cleared of small centres of population which support Kurdish fighters and declared a "prohibited region", Turkey's national security council has been told.

The documents, passed to the Kurdish language satellite station Med-TV in London, are understood to form a report, entitled Proposals For Solutions, submitted to the national security council at its meeting on January 27. The papers also advocate "covert and overt" actions against Hadep, the main Kurdish political party within Turkey, and suggest that Med-TV broadcasts should be "obstructed and suppressed".

Running to more than 30 pages, the report appears to provide a detailed insight into government and military thinking on a broad range of anti-terrorist measures. It stresses the need for a spirit of "national unity" and an "atmosphere of trust".

A senior government information officer in Ankara said last weekend: "These ideas are regularly taken up by the national security council at its meetings. There have been suggestions about a neutral zone or security belt. But we don't have much problem inside Turkish territory; the problems are outside."

The report to the national security council also said there should be a "psycho-social" campaign to end the war against the PKK (the Kurdistan Workers' Party), which has fought for an independent Kurdish homeland in eastern Turkey since the mid-1980s.

On sealing off the border from PKK attacks, the report says, "the existence of small centres of population on the borders" eases the passage of terrorists and the provision of logistic support by collaborators in these centres. "For this reason, a border strip should be evacuated and buffer zones formed."

The report warns that Hadep should be kept "under surveillance" with the aim of "pacifying" it. "Overt and covert and persistent pressure should be placed on Hadep by means of the state, civilian community organisation and universities."

*Chris Nuttall in Ankara adds:* Tanks rumbling through an Ankara suburb and a censure motion tabled in parliament could be signalling the end of the first Islamist-led government in the 74-year history of the Turkish republic.

The secular establishment is striking back at the increasingly bold attempts of the prime minister Necmettin Erbakan's Welfare Party to reintroduce religion in affairs of state.

The opposition Democratic Left Party (DSP) announced last week that it had submitted a censure motion to the Speaker of parliament. And on Tuesday the military staged a show of force in Sincan, outside Ankara, sending 35 tanks and armoured personnel carriers through the streets of the Welfare-controlled municipality. Its mayor went into hiding after a warrant was issued for his arrest for organising a radical Muslim festival.

**Le Monde, page 18**

# St Helena's citizens long for distant home

**Ian Black and Angela Wigglesworth**

NOT SO much the jewel in the crown as a forgotten speck in the south Atlantic, the far-flung island of St Helena has issued an angry protest to Britain about discrimination, compared with wealthier fellow-colonials in Hong Kong.

Napoleon spent his dying days here after Waterloo, and some of today's 5,800 inhabitants are also having some negative home thoughts from abroad, for their government has petitioned the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, complaining that they are unjustly being denied full British citizenship.

"St Helenians have had no nationality other than British from the time Britain first settled the island in 1659," says a letter from the island's legislative council.

St Helenians are of mixed ethnic origin, descended from settlers sent by the East India Company from Britain, South Asia, the East Indies and Madagascar.

Their claim goes back to 1673 when a royal charter stated that "natives" and future generations should be given full citizenship "as if they had been abiding and borne within the realme of England". But successive acts of parliament eroded their rights and the 1981 British Nationality Act gave them British dependent territory citizenship, with the loss of full British citizenship.

Hong Kong has its own charges of betrayal. But 50,000 Chinese and their dependants have been given British citizenship there and last week the Home Office relented and extended this to 8,000 Asians who could be left stateless after this summer's handover to China.

But in the south Atlantic, an aggrieved Basil George, chairman of the local citizenship commission, insisted that the people of St Helena have always remained loyal to their distant ruler.

"Why should St Helenians be denied the right to full British citizenship when this has been granted not only to Chinese nationals and Asians in Hong Kong, but also to the people of the Falklands and Gibraltar, which are also dependent?" he said.

Officials at the Foreign Office in London said Mr Rifkind would be responding to the petition shortly, though he is unlikely to have any good news.

Jamestown
SAINT HELENA (to UK)
Mt. Actaeon
5km



# Duma claims art stash as reparation

**James Meek in Moscow and Denis Staunton in Berlin**

PRICELESS works of European and Asian art secretly plundered from Germany by Soviet troops at the end of the second world war are now Russian property and will be returned only in exceptional circumstances, the lower house of the Russian parliament, the Duma, declared in a law passed last week.

In a move calculated to infuriate Germany and the other European countries from which the "trophy art" was taken, deputies voted by 291 to one to designate all cultural treasures transferred to the USSR after the war as compensation for the damage to Russian culture caused by the Nazi invasion.

The law, a slightly modified version of a bill rejected by the upper house last year, can be vetoed by President Boris Yeltsin. But, without the Duma's approval, he is unlikely to take any action to return the art.

The Russian claim that the art is compensation is a recent one. For almost 50 years the paintings were kept secret. Russia admitted the existence of the hoard in the early 1990s and only in the past five years have exhibitions in St Petersburg and Moscow revealed paintings by Matisse, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Goya, Renoir and Degas and the Gold of Troy, discovered by a 19th century archaeologist, Heinrich Schliemann, all previously believed lost.

Special Soviet art squads followed the Red Army, combing the ruins of the Reich and sending treasure home by the wagonload.

Germany now says Russia is going back on earlier promises to return the booty — 200,000 items in all.

Despite international sympathy for the wounds inflicted on the USSR during the war, there is concern that the Duma, dominated by patriots and nostalgic communists, is so obsessed with the idea of Soviet citizens as war victims that it ignores the suffering of other European peoples at the hands of the Nazis, particularly central European Jews.

Among the pictures exhibited at the Pushkin museum in 1995 were eight belonging to a Hungarian Jewish refugee, Baron Lajos Hatvany-Deutsch, whose collection was plundered by one of Adolf Eichmann's Nazi teams. The Hungarian government says it fails to understand why Hungarian Jews should compensate Russia for the Nazi invasion of the USSR.

A gesture early on in Mr Yeltsin's first presidency, when he returned two pictures to Budapest, provoked patriotic outrage at home. But he recently sent the Hungarian president, Arpad Goncz, a message saying he wanted the issue settled.

Signalling government anger with parliament, the Russian deputy culture minister, Mikhail Shvydkoi, said last week that the law could rebound badly on Russia abroad. "I have serious doubts about this law," he said. "The Duma has gone ahead and passed it virtually in its original format, regardless of our suggestions as to how it could be improved."

The law makes no distinction between artworks taken from museums and private collectors, although it does say that items of personal value, such as letters, may be handed back to relatives on "humanitarian grounds". Governments may apply for the return of artworks taken "illegally" by Soviet forces, although it is unclear what this means.

# Swiss banks set up fund for Jewish victims

**Owen Bennett Jones in Geneva**

SWITZERLAND'S three largest banks last week created a $72 million humanitarian fund for Holocaust victims. An official statement from the banks said that the time had come for "action, not words" and that the money had already been deposited at the Swiss National Bank.

Senior Swiss bankers have become frustrated by their government's failure to deflect international criticism of Switzerland's wartime conduct. The World Jewish Congress accuses Switzerland of sitting on Jewish wartime assets worth billions of pounds.

The banks — Crédit Suisse, the Swiss Bank Corporation, and the Union Bank of Switzerland — said the fund would be open to contributions from others "including the Swiss National Bank and the Swiss government".

But while the government was quick to welcome the banks' move as being "in accordance with government policy", it refused to be drawn on whether or not it will contribute. A government spokesman, Roland Bless, said that the independent commission investigating Switzerland's wartime role is due to make an interim report this summer. "Only then will we decide whether to contribute or not," he said.

But the banks decided that they could not wait that long. The New York city administration recently threatened to exclude Swiss banks from doing business with the city. And draft legislation in New York state would oblige foreign banks to disclose the value of assets linked to the accounts of Holocaust victims.

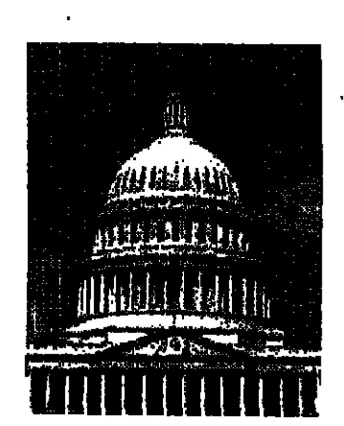
● Britain has begun a fresh investigation into gold looted by the Nazis, including personal belongings stolen from Jews, the Foreign Office said last week. The inquiry should be completed next month.

The move follows an agreement by the wartime allies, confirmed last week, to freeze about $67 million-worth of gold looted by Germany to see whether it can be distributed to Holocaust survivors.

The gold has been held in special accounts under the control of a Tripartite Commission run by Britain, the US and France. The three powers have agreed not to distribute the gold to wartime occupied countries, including France, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and the states of former Yugoslavia, to which it is officially owed.

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# Clinton pins colours to education crusade



## The US this week

Martin Walker

PRESIDENT Clinton used his annual State of the Union address to challenge Congress to enact a bipartisan bill to reform the scandalous campaign finance system. He called on both parties to enact the new law by July 4 — Independence Day — with an emotional appeal to renew the public's shaken faith in American democracy.

Draped in the language of political common ground, Clinton wants to persuade the public that an agreement to control the abuse of political fund-raising is the litmus test of the bipartisanship which the opinion polls say the voters want, and to which all politicians are currently paying lip-service.

Not only would this deflect attention from the president's own embarrassments in huckstering White House hospitality to big donors, it also undermines the Republican strategy to make a constitutional amendment to enforce a balanced budget the test of bipartisanship.

The entire chamber rose in standing ovation when he called, in the usual bland terms, for campaign finance reform in general. Then he asked them to pass the particular bill already offered by Senator Russ Feingold, a Democrat from Wisconsin, and Senator John McCain, a Republican from Arizona.

The air is unusually thick in Washington with pieties about both parties working together, the new vital centre and all the usual hypocrisies politicians spout when they fear the voters are in a mood to gang up on them. The Republicans are almost frantic in their attempts to match the president's bipartisan rhetoric. Speaker Newt Gingrich announced that he wanted to help Clinton enlarge both Nato and the North Atlantic Free Trade Area, and to pay off American arrears to the United Nations. Senator Trent Lott, the Republican leader in the upper house, invited the president to lunch "to sit down and see what we can really do to move some things forward for the American people".

Then it was back to business as usual. Clinton's budget offered $98 billion in tax cuts, in a total budget of $1.7 trillion, which is claimed will achieve a modest surplus by 2002. If successful, it would be the first balanced federal budget since President Lyndon Johnson's last one, for fiscal year 1969. Fulfilling his campaign pledge to give all American families a $500-per-child tax cut, the Clinton plan also includes tax relief for college education, a measure which the Republicans will find it politically dangerous to oppose.

Besides the poor, the only person expected to suffer directly from Clinton's cuts is Vice-President Al Gore. Most of the cuts to reach a balanced budget come during election campaign in 2000 and the first year of what is supposed to be the Gore administration.

It is all rather notional. The budget deficit this year is down to just over $100 billion, rather than the $270 billion Clinton inherited four years ago. This is partly because taxes were raised and spending modestly cut in President Bush's 1990 budget, and because taxes were raised again in the Clinton budget of 1993. But the deficit is lower mainly because of the spirited and accelerating economic recovery of the past six years, which has cut welfare and unemployment costs and sharply raised tax revenues. When the boom stops — and it seems to be slowing — the budget deficit will start to rise again.

Although there was not a vast amount of difference between this budget and the one Clinton sent up a year ago, to Republican jeers, they did not pronounce this one "dead on arrival". They suggested gently that it might not go quite far enough for their taste, but it was quite enough to work with. Clinton is relying on $100 billion from savings in Medicare (for the elderly) over five years, and another $22 billion from Medicaid (for the poor). The savings come not from the customers, but from the providers — the hospitals and doctors. He seeks to raise $76 billion in new taxes on businesses and airline tickets, $47 billion from new user fees for federal services, and expects to raise $36 billion from auctioning broadcasting licences. Then he pledged to spend $50 billion more on education.

Fresh from this declaration of "a national crusade for education" in his State of the Union address, Clinton went to Georgia last week to campaign for his plan to make higher education available to all American school-leavers. The keystone of his 10-point plan of education reform, the college-for-all proposal, has begun to catch the public imagination.

Education reform was the constant theme of Clinton's re-election campaign last year, and is given the highest priority in opinion polls, sharply above crime, jobs and the economy. Unlike his predecessor George Bush, who simply talked of being "the education president", Clinton has made the theme his own. Indeed, he did much the same in Arkansas, in his second term as governor, when he first seemed to realise that education was the Santa Claus of American politics, the issue no other politician dared challenge.

Clinton remains rightly praised in Arkansas for his school reforms, but in Washington this is a triumph of marketing over reality, since the federal government commands less than 10 per cent of an education budget that is largely controlled by the individual states.

"Education is one of the critical national security issues of the future, and politics must stop at the classroom door," he told Congress, and repeated the line in Georgia, using the bully pulpit of his presidency to demand that Congress vote the funds to finance his plans. Georgia is the source of inspiration for the new Hope scholarships plan — Helping Outstanding Pupils' Education. It uses the proceeds of a state lottery to finance two years of a student's local college tuition fees so long as he or she maintains a B average in course results. Clinton now proposes to extend this throughout the country, but there is no national lottery, so he must deploy a complex mix of tax credits and tax-free savings bonds.

Apart from offering two years of $1,500 tax credits for a student to attend a local community college, Clinton is also promising the American middle class the biggest cash bonanza of modern times, a tax deduction of up to $10,000 a year for college fees. This will be available to all parents who would have sent their children to college anyway, and the subsidy to the middle class to allow their children to get the middle-class status symbol of a college degree will cost the taxpayer at least $20 billion.




THE OTHER main features of the Clinton education plan includes national classroom achievement standards, criticised by Republicans as a back door way of introducing a national curriculum, Internet connections for classrooms and hospitals, a national volunteer programme to help all children read by the age of eight, and more school choice.

"My number one priority for the next four years is to ensure that Americans have the best education in the world," Clinton told Congress. "Let's work together to meet these goals: every eight-year-old must be able to read; every 12-year-old must be able to log on to the Internet; every 18-year-old must be able to go to college; and every adult American must be able to keep on learning."

Clinton asked the Republican Congress to help him complete "unfinished business" in the reforms of welfare, education and children's health. Still itching at the humiliating defeat of his wife's attempt to develop a national health system, the president offered a new initiative to guarantee health care to the 10 million children who are not insured. He announced a diluted form of the plan already tabled by Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, in which uninsured children would be given health care vouchers worth $5 billion a year.

These are fairly modest goals in domestic policy for a president embarking on a second term, with his eyes fixed on his place in history. The far more ambitious foreign policy plans — to bring the cold war's eastern European orphans into Nato, and to cajole China into a stable new security system for the Asia-Pacific region — were quickly glossed over.

The State of the Union address is, after all, a fundamentally domestic event, an annual ritual in which the president sets out his political agenda for the year before both Houses of Congress, and one of the few occasions outside an election when he can be guaranteed an hour to himself of prime-time TV. At least, he should be so guaranteed, but that almost went wrong.

For the world's most self-indulgent and media-saturated culture faced the ultimate dilemma: did American viewers and their TV networks stay with the president's annual State of the Union address — or did they drop the boring politician and shift to the O J Simpson verdict? The word came from the Santa Monica courtroom that the jury would deliver its verdict at 6pm California time, which just happened to be 9pm Washington time, when the president was due to rise to address Congress.

"You may be wondering what we're going to do at that point," NBC anchor Tom Brokaw said just before 9pm. "We're wondering that as well."

NBC solved it by keeping its cable news channel, MS-NBC, locked on to O J while the network stayed with Clinton. CNN had a similar schizoid solution, sticking with Clinton on its main channel and going to Simpson on CNN Headline News. CBS and ABC, dreading the effect on their ratings, did the honourable thing, and stuck with the president, while a written text on O J ran across the bottom of the screens like subtitles on a foreign-language film.

IN THE END, the networks were spared too much agony. It took so long for the judge, Simpson and the families of the murder victims to get to the courtroom through the crowds and police barriers that the verdict was finally announced more than an hour later than expected.

Clinton was well into the last few paragraphs of his address when the first unanimous verdict emerged from the Santa Monica courtroom, where no television cameras had been allowed: O J Simpson had been found liable for the deaths of his ex-wife Nicole and her friend, Ronald Goldman.

"It was choreographed politics versus unpredictable courtroom drama, a perfect example of the dichotomy between what America wants to be and what, perhaps, it is," noted one AP commentator.

Actually, what much America wants to be is among the audience at the Ms United States beauty pageant, which was held the night after the president's speech, thanks to urgent White House pleas to shift the event so that the curvaceous young women in swimsuits would not steal the president's big moment. But he had not taken O J into account.

The ultimate irony came on the cable TV system in Washington DC, through which the political junkies of the nation's capital get their CNN news, and their live coverage of political events on C-Span. Just as Clinton was hailing "the thrilling challenge of the Internet and the new technology", the old technology collapsed, and Washington's TV screens went dark.

Martin Woollacott, page 15

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# Peace lies in hands of brutal warlords

A Special Correspondent

WHEN he's drunk, Said Rahimov oozes savagery. His militia unit is nominally part of Tajikistan's interior ministry, but he curses his commanders. Beyond their distant authority, he becomes one of six petty warlords who rule the road to Garm.

His harsh fiefdom — a village, a bridge and some orchards carved from a mile of the stony grey Karategin valley — lies astride the only passable road linking eastern Tajikistan with Dushanbe, the capital of this poor, mountainous republic on the southern fringe of former Soviet Central Asia.

Mr Rahimov scorns human rights and the rules of war. In his domain, robbery, torture and murder pass unrecognised as crimes. His defeated young soldiers are shell-shocked, ragged and hungry. Their comrades were killed in December's Islamic opposition onslaught and now their company, which should comprise 100 men, has just 20 fighters.

Without reserves, desperate government forces resort to press-ganging youths on Dushanbe's streets. Conscripts face months of combat stress, their nerves fray and discipline breaks down. Some soak in stolen vodka, others raid villages to feed themselves. Ill-timed intrusions into this volatile realm can explode into chaos in seconds.

Shortly after last December's ceasefire, as a United Nations peacekeeping convoy passed Mr Rahimov's Saripul checkpost, its leading Land Rovers radioed a calm "no problem" to the rearguard. Moments later Mr Rahimov, irrational, drunk and snarling with incoherent rage, forced the last four UN soldiers from their vehicles, lined them up beside a telegraph pole. Ranting, gesticulating and machine-gunning wildly, he decided to execute them. Less than a mile away, their colleagues heard nothing.

The government will not discipline Mr Rahimov for his misdeeds. Never sure of the loyalties of its troops, it cannot move units to the Karategin front line for fear of upsetting the delicate political-military balance contrived to appease mutually hostile regional factions. The valley has four separate government command structures, and each unit guards its independence fiercely.

Mr Rahimov is not the worst of Tajikistan's warlords — others play for higher stakes. One sent tanks 110km to oust a rival; a fellow government supporter. Another casually looted a British-owned gold mine, one of Tajikistan's few sources of wealth. And last week, a third resumed hostage-taking, which in December bought his fighters free passage from neighbouring Afghanistan.

Men like these will make or break the fragile peace accord signed in Moscow last December by President Imomali Rakhmonov and the Islamic opposition leader Said Abdullo Nuri. Unlike earlier agreements, this latest pact holds some promise of a lasting settlement.

Uncharacteristically, most commanders have respected the ceasefire, or what passes for a ceasefire in Tajikistan — a few small bombs, a couple of shootings, some settling of personal scores and last week's spate of hostage-taking. A delicate peace reigns across the country.

Russia and Iran, the most interested regional powers, remain supportive. So does the guardedly optimistic UN mediator, Gerd Dietrich Merrem, who, free of career constraints on his final posting, has played rough to get the antagonists this far. Few believe UN threats to pull out when its peacekeeping mandate expires next month, but both sides know that, without progress, Mr Merrem might call their bluff.

Other signs bode ill. The war masks lucrative illegal trading and drug-running, and offers opportunities to loot, rob and hoard. Peace would curtail such profiteering. Parliament's hatred of the Islamists may impel the government to dodge the spirit of its Moscow promises to placate its own supporters.

Historic inter-regional enmity, inflamed by recent atrocities, will not be easily healed — many soldiers know that although the blighted rural economy cannot yet support them, fighting can.

So far both the government and the Islamic opposition have largely ignored the secular opposition, strong in the isolated, but peaceful and economically important north.

This year will be a watershed. For the first time in five years, Tajiks have a slim but realistic chance of negotiating lasting peace. Talks will resume in Moscow at the end of the month.

If the proposed National Reconcillation Commission can be made to work, fair elections under a new constitution could follow. But the disarmament of the factions will be the ultimate guarantee of peace.

Meanwhile in Saripul, Mr Rahimov spared his UN peacekeepers when, instead, his men loosed frenzied cannon and Kalashnikov fire at an approaching Jeep, which froze for 15 eternal seconds unscathed amid the inferno, then finally fled. But Mr Rahimov and his men, aboard a hijacked UN vehicle, tracked the Jeep to the village. There, in a hail of bullets, they euphorically destroyed it. No one knew who was inside.

● Tajikistan's president held talks last weekend to resolve the country's hostage crisis, but a senior official said no agreement had been reached to free the 15 captives.

But the presidential spokesman, Zafar Saidov, said progress had been made in the meeting between President Rakhmonov and a warlord controlling parts of northern Afghanistan, where Tajikistan's Islamic opposition take refuge.

Among the hostages held by the group of opposition rebels are four United Nations military observers captured on Tuesday last week, four Russian reporters and four aid workers, who were captured later.

The Tajik security minister, Saidamir Zukharov, was also captured last weekend while negotiating with the rebels.

The group is demanding free passage for their comrades to return home from Afghanistan. — *Reuter*

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# The president's secret henchmen

Accusations that Slobodan Milosevic controlled a covert group of policeman directing a campaign of ethnic cleansing may help bring him before the war crimes tribunal, writes **Julian Borger** in Belgrade

AS SLOBODAN Milosevic's once unquestioned power bleeds away and erstwhile allies turn into potential prosecution witnesses, the day is drawing closer when the Serbian president could stand before the war crimes tribunal in The Hague charged with responsibility for the worst atrocities in Europe since the Holocaust.

In interviews with the Guardian, a former paramilitary commander, a sacked police chief, and a senior member of Milosevic's leftwing coalition have described how a small group of Serbian secret policemen under Milosevic's direct control co-ordinated a covert dirty war by arming thousands of convicts and sending them to fight in Croatia and Bosnia. From April 1991 until the end of the war in late 1995, these paramilitary groups, such as the Serbian Chetnik Movement and Arkan's Tigers, carried out a murderous campaign of ethnic cleansing and looting across a large swath of the former Yugoslavia. Pulling the strings from the shadows was a small group of men from the state security department of the Serbian interior ministry, appointed by Milosevic and totally loyal to him. Within the ministry, they were known as the *vojna linija* (military line).

This new evidence of a parallel chain of command is crucial to any future indictment against Milosevic, who also appears to have lost the diplomatic protection he enjoyed when the West viewed him as a guarantor of peace in Bosnia. He is now seen more as a source of instability. It is no longer inconceivable that The Hague could issue an indictment against Milosevic, making him the world's highest-ranking war crimes defendant since Hermann Goering stood in the dock at Nuremberg.

Witnesses name three key figures in the *vojna linija* responsible for arming and training paramilitaries — Radovan "Badza" Stojicic, Franko "Frenki" Simatovic, and Mihalj Kertes. They worked for Jovica Stanisic, the head of Milosevic's secret police. Kertes was also Milosevic's "minister for the Serb diaspora", providing him with a pretext for constant travel in Croatia and Bosnia. All these men now hold powerful positions in the Milosevic regime. One key source, Branislav Vakic, first met Badza in May 1991, in the eastern Slavonia region of Croatia. Vakic, a former boxing champion from Serbia's second city of Nis, was determined to fight for his kin at a time when Yugoslavia was imploding and skirmishes were breaking out between Serbs and Croats. Vakic came with a band of adventurers and freed convicts calling themselves the Serbian Chetnik Movement under the leadership of a bespectacled history professor called Vojislav Seselj.

When the Chetniks slouched into eastern Slovenia, many were carrying only hunting rifles. Badza soon put that right. "MUP [the interior ministry] started to help the Chetniks in May," says Vakic. "The MUP forces at that time were under Radovan Stojicic — Badza. We just got weapons from them then. But we started to act together in January 1993, in Skelani and towards Srebrenica."

By the time the Chetniks moved on to Bosnia, Vakic was in charge of 6,000 men. Badza moved into Bosnia at the same time. His influence is clear from some photographs Vakic proudly displays in his offices in Nis. A picture from 1991 shows him and a handful of fellow Chetniks brandishing a few 1940s Thompson machine-guns. Two years later, in a snap taken near Srebrenica, Vakic is posing with a sophisticated sniper rifle. "We got uniforms from MUP, and the weapons we wanted: infantry weapons, machine-guns, sniper rifles . . . and mortars," he recalls.

In early 1992, Vakic says his men were trained at a military base near Belgrade, called Bubanj Potok. Later in 1992 and 1993, his Chetniks were moved down to a new base at Bajina Basta (on the Bosnian border) where they met "Frenki" Simatovic, who ran an interior ministry special forces unit known as the "red berets". Frenki not only trained Vakic's men, he accompanied them in forays against Muslims as the war spread into Bosnia.

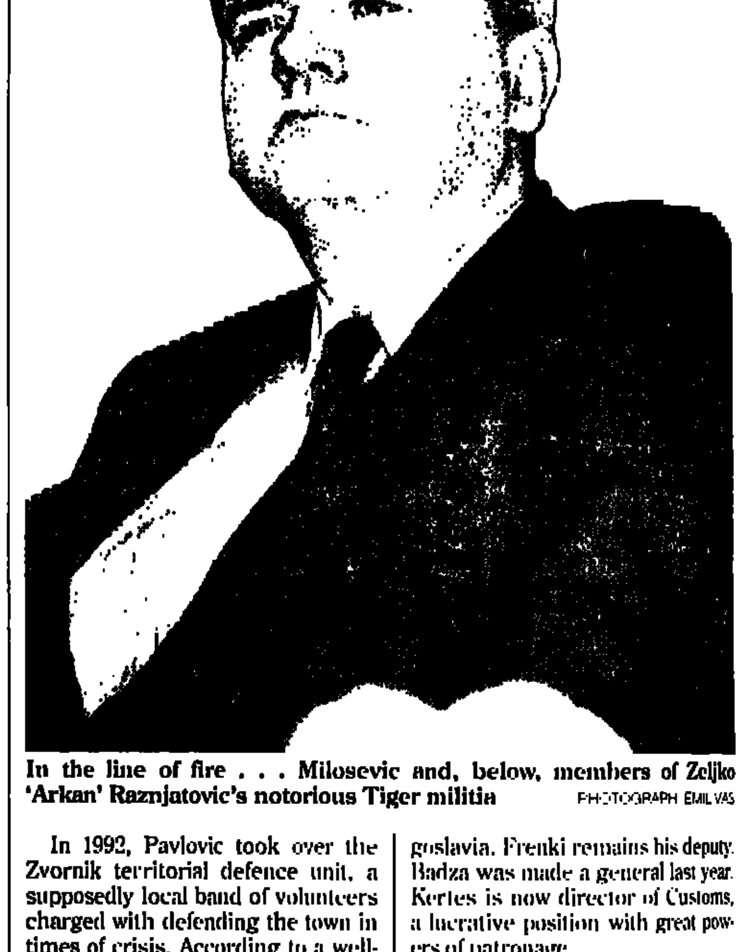
In August 1993, Vakic sent 300 of his men for further training in a Serbian interior ministry on Mount Tara, near Bajina Basta, but says the relationship with Frenki's men broke down soon afterwards when they tried to make Vakic and his troops leave the Radical Party. The red berets, Vakic says, were loyal only to Milosevic and his Serbian Socialist Party.

Seselj, Vakic's boss in the Chetniks and the Radical Party, has also told journalists how his men fought alongside the red berets, mentioning not only Frenki but also Mihalj Kertes as their commanders. Kertes is also named as a red berets commander by another Serb warlord, Dragoslav Bokan, now in jail for armed robbery. While Frenki took over as the Chetniks' handler in eastern Bosnia, Badza linked up with Zeljko "Arkan" Raznjatovic and his notorious Tiger militia. Marko Nicovic, a former Belgrade police chief, says that Badza formed a "special relationship with Arkan in eastern Slovenia". From that moment on, he adds, Arkan, a former bank robber with a long criminal record, became untouchable.

Arkan's case was not exceptional. According to Nicovic, the doors of Serbia's prisons were thrown open in 1991, and "thousands" of convicts were released so they could fight in paramilitary groups such as the Chetniks and the Tigers. "The convicts were told, 'if you go to the front line, we will cut your sentence'. They thought 'maybe I can make some money there'. They went across the border. For a professional policeman it was a bit strange," says Nicovic. "In using criminals, for example, as informants, there is always a narrow line you walk along. The police here crossed that line by a mile."

At the time Nicovic was a highly decorated senior police officer and Badza was a uniformed patrolman. But after Milosevic came to power in 1987, and Stanisic rose with him to the head of Serbian state security, Badza was co-opted and sent away "for work in Croatia and Bosnia". When Badza next resurfaced in Belgrade, in 1992, he was made head of Serbia's uniformed police.

Below Badza, Frenki and Kertes, there was a network of state security agents who co-ordinated the process of ethnic cleansing. At the very start of the Bosnian war in April 1992, paramilitary groups crossed from Serbia into the border town of Zvornik and carried out a series of massacres of Muslims. The killers' transport and co-ordination was organised by a man calling himself Marko Pavlovic.





In the line of fire . . . Milosevic and, below, members of Zeljko 'Arkan' Raznjatovic's notorious Tiger militia PHOTOGRAPH: EMIL VAS

In 1992, Pavlovic took over the Zvornik territorial defence unit, a supposedly local band of volunteers charged with defending the town in times of crisis. According to a well-informed Serb source in Zvornik at the time, Pavlovic was a member of the Serbian state security service.

THE EVIDENCE of the interior ministry's role in orchestrating the ethnic cleansing campaign has great legal significance. Milosevic can theoretically disown operations carried out under the command of the Yugoslav National Army, a federal body, while Milosevic was "merely" the president of one of Yugoslavia's constituent republics, Serbia.

Although most members of Yugoslavia's collective presidency were little more than Milosevic's puppets, the president had no constitutional authority over the army. But unlike officers in the Yugoslav National Army, the policemen in the *vojna linija* — as employees of the Serbian republic — were directly appointed and constitutionally accountable to Milosevic.

Borisav Jovic, chairman of the Yugoslav collective presidency when the war started and Milosevic's former right-hand man, makes it clear that the interior ministry was the sole responsibility of his erstwhile mentor. "Everything to do with state security is the responsibility of the president of the republic, objectively and on the grounds of the constitution."

In the course of an interview, Jovic (probably with one eye on the Hague) emphatically distances himself from the Serbian interior ministry's wartime activities. "If anything like you describe existed, it had nothing to do with me, nor was I consulted about that."

The chain of command running from the *vojna linija* to Milosevic is clear. Not only did the president fail to discipline his men after the revelation of atrocities carried out in areas under their control, he promoted them. Stanisic, as the head of the state security service, is widely regarded by diplomats as the second most powerful man in Yugoslavia. Frenki remains his deputy. Badza was made a general last year. Kertes is now director of Customs, a lucrative position with great powers of patronage.

The *vojna linija* circle remains the power behind Milosevic's throne — the sinews of power beneath a skin-deep façade of ministers. They now represent the only prop keeping Milosevic in power. But as his regime begins to crack under the pressure of street protests and international condemnation, this prop is starting to wobble. His henchmen are losing confidence in his judgment and wondering aloud whether their own best interests do not lie in striking a separate deal with the UN war crimes tribunal at The Hague.

Vakic, now the leader of the ultra-right Radical Party in Nis, is furious at the regime's attempt to rig local elections there, and believes Milosevic is bound to fall. He has collated a mass of documents he insists will prove he and his men are innocent of any war crimes, and that all the actions they undertook were under the direct command of the Serbian government.

Another potential witness for the prosecution, Nikola Koljevic, died in a Belgrade hospital last month after apparently shooting himself in the head. As the Bosnian Serb vice-president during the war, he kept copious notes of all discussions with Milosevic. Other Bosnian Serb leaders indicted by The Hague tribunal have privately let it be known that if caught they would testify they were carrying out Milosevic's instructions.

Even Milosevic's spymaster, Stanisic, has intimated through friends and colleagues that he has tried to persuade the president to compromise with the opposition, and has expressed his concern at the growing hardline influence of Milosevic's wife, Mirjana Markovic.

As the cohesion of the inner circle diminishes, the more wartime secrets come to the surface. Milosevic faces not only the strong possibility of political defeat this year, he has to contemplate the humiliating transition from Serbia's chief executive to the world's most wanted fugitive.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 16 1997



# Guardian victory in landmark libel case

**Alison Daniels**

A HIGH Court jury's decision to throw out a Police Federation-backed libel action by five Metropolitan Police officers against the Guardian was hailed last week as a victory for press freedom.

The verdict leaves the federation facing costs of more than £500,000, in addition to paying a substantial part of the newspaper's costs. It is the organisation's first defeat in 96 legal actions.

The five officers — Reynold Bennett, Bernard Gillan, Paul Goscomb, Gerald Mapp and Robert Watton — had claimed that two articles published in the Guardian on January 31, 1992 suggested they were involved in planting and dealing drugs. This meaning was denied by the Guardian.

The newspaper's crime correspondent, Duncan Campbell, reported that eight unnamed officers had been transferred from Stoke Newington police station in north-east London after allegations that an anti-corruption operation headed by a senior officer was under way.

The Guardian's editor, Alan Rusbridger said: "This was an opportunistic action by a trade union which has systematically tried to shut down legitimate reporting in an important area of public life. I think the jury recognised that — and they saw for themselves that Duncan Campbell is a fine, decent and honest reporter.

"It's a good day for the press. It would be an even better day if the libel law were changed to give better protection to smaller papers who have been forced to cave in when threatened with the huge costs of fighting an action."

Mr Campbell said the verdict was an important one for journalists who want to honestly report investigations into alleged corruption.

The editor of the London Evening Standard, Max Hastings, whose witness evidence was ruled inadmissible by the trial judge, Mr Justice French, said: "I passionately believe that this case had an importance for the British press as a whole and that we should all be grateful to the Guardian for taking the enormous risks of fighting it against all the odds."

Deputy general secretary of the National Union of Journalists, Jacob Ecclestone, said the verdict would encourage others to "stand up to the federation bullies".

One the country's leading libel lawyers, Mark Stephens, of London firm Stephens Innocent, said: "This decision will hopefully embolden newspapers which have effectively self-censored their reporting."

A High Court jury took five and an half hours to reach a majority verdict in favour of the Guardian after a trial lasting more than two weeks.

In court the Guardian strenuously denied that the allegations detailed in the articles identified the five plaintiffs to anyone outside a small circle of relatives and colleagues, implied guilt or pre-judged an anti-corruption investigation, Operation Jackpot.

Defending the newspaper, George Carman, QC, told the jury the officers' action was strained and contrived and a wholly unjustified attempt to gain damages. For the officers, Tom Shields, QC, had argued that the articles stigmatised the five officers.

In the course of the trial, the court was told by retired deputy assistant commissioner Michael Taylor that, if they proved true, the allegations had the makings of a major police scandal, while the chairman of the Police Complaints Authority, Peter Moorhouse, confirmed that the allegations were extremely serious.

As well as ruling against hearing evidence from Mr Rusbridger and Mr Hastings, Mr Justice French ruled that significant sections of statements made by other defence witnesses were inadmissible.

In the past 33 months, the Police Federation has fought and won 95 defamation actions, netting £1,567,000. The Metropolitan Police paid out £500,000 between January 1992 and the end of 1996 in civil action settlements for claims of malicious prosecution and false arrest to people arrested by officers from Stoke Newington.

The verdict was greeted with disappointment by Fred Broughton, chairman of the Police Federation. "We are surprised that the jury did not share our view of the meaning of the article," he said.

**Half-free press, page 14**

# Wren's sex harassment case upheld

**David Ward**

A FORMER Wren who tried to kill herself after enduring four years of sexual harassment in the Royal Navy last week won her claim for compensation from the Ministry of Defence.

Lesley Morris, aged 23, said she was "chuffed to pieces" after an industrial tribunal in Manchester ruled that she had been constructively dismissed and awarded her £65,377.

Elaine Donnelly, chairing the panel, said: "I state for the record that this award should be seen as a message to all senior officers in the navy that it is unacceptable for such harassment to be tolerated."

Ms Morris, from Shotton, near Chester, told the hearing she had been overjoyed when she joined the service at 17, but became depressed because of sexual harassment.

She told the hearing she took a paracetamol overdose and was discharged from the navy as "temperamentally unsuitable" in 1995. "It broke my heart to leave the navy," she said. "It was all I ever wanted to do but I was terrified of going back to sea."

After the decision she said: "I'm so glad now that I went through with this and carried on. It has been hell but I'm glad I've been able to put my story across and say what happened to me.

Lesley Morris: 'chuffed to pieces' by the harassment ruling

"I don't think the navy has changed much since I left. The top dogs are bringing in policies and they are trying to solve the problem, but to be honest . . . things are not going to change."

Ms Morris, who works in a factory earning £145 a week, added that she hoped the publicity surrounding the hearing would encourage Wrens to report incidents of sexual harassment.

"There are still a lot of poor girls in the navy going through exactly the same as I did," she said. "There is no legal aid for these cases and it has cost me an awful lot of money. I think that puts other girls off, so I hope that has changed."

Ms Morris wept as she told the tribunal how a former sailor who now works in the same factory as she does had insulted her when he discovered she was a Wren.

The tribunal was told by consultant psychiatrist David Enoch that Ms Morris had suffered a "Chinese torture" of humiliation.

"The constant sexual harassment and bullying were a massive precipitant in her depression," he said. "In my view it will take a long time for it to fade and will be a source of vulnerability for the rest of her life."

The MoD had suggested Ms Morris's depression was caused by problems with her boyfriend and sexual abuse she had suffered in her childhood, but she denied this.

She told the tribunal she had applied for a job in the police last year but had been rejected because she had received psychiatric treatment following her depression.

# Widow wins fight to have dead man's baby

**Clare Dyer**

DIANE BLOOD, the widow who has battled for nearly two years to have her dead husband's baby, could be artificially inseminated with his sperm in a Belgian clinic next month after winning a landmark court victory last week.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority had banned her from using sperm taken from her husband, Stephen, in March 1995 when he lay dying in a coma because he had not given written consent.

The HFEA could still maintain its ban. But the Court of Appeal judgment makes a go-ahead virtually certain.

Mrs Blood, aged 32, hailed the ruling as "a victory for common sense and justice".

European Community law, which gives the citizens of EC countries the right to have medical treatment in other member states, came to Mrs Blood's rescue after she was turned down last October by the High Court's family division. She will have to pay for treatment in Belgium.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act bans treatment in Britain after a sperm donor's death without his consent. But three judges, led by the Master of the Rolls, Lord Woolf, ruled that the authority's refusal to exercise its discretion to allow the sperm to be taken abroad was flawed, because it failed to take full account of rights under EC law.

The authority will reconsider its decision at its next meeting on February 27. But it will have to produce strong public policy reasons to refuse Mrs Blood her right as an EC citizen to have the treatment in another member state, and the judges made it clear they could think of no such reasons.

However, the ruling will bar other women in similar circumstances from following her example. The judges said her case was unique because it was now clear that the extraction and storage of the sperm without Mr Blood's consent had been unlawful under the Act. Therefore there can be no fresh cases, making it difficult to justify the ban on public policy grounds.

**The Week in Britain** James Lewis

# Head teachers are latest target of school inspectors

CHRIS WOODHEAD, the Government's chief inspector of schools, maintained his reputation as the teaching profession's most trenchant critic when, in a combative annual report, he blamed 3,000 head teachers for failing to provide adequate leadership.

His overall findings were an improvement on the previous year's. The proportion of poor or unsatisfactory lessons had dropped from 18 per cent to 16 per cent, he said, and he revised his previous estimate of 15,000 incompetent teachers to 13,000. Progress was being made, even though the process was "slow, difficult and sometimes painful".

But the report still enraged the teaching community, which contends that his continuous criticism has sapped morale and contributed to a stampede for early retirement. David Hart, leader of the National Association of Head Teachers, said Mr Woodhead had become the Cassandra of the education service, "always crying 'woe, woe and three times woe'. As a consequence, his message will increasingly be ignored by the very people he hopes to influence."

This kind of backlash, however, seems only to stiffen the resolve of the Office of Standards in Education. Mike Tomlinson, Ofsted's head of inspection, responded: "I don't give a monkey's toss for the teachers. It's the children I care about."

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THE SHADOW education secretary, David Blunkett, surprised everyone with his assurance that a Labour government would "pose no threat to the continuance of grammar schools, or to their ethos or their quality". This was the same Mr Blunkett who, a year ago, promised Labour would ballot parents with a view to scrapping grammar schools.

The Prime Minister's ambition is to have a grammar school in every town. But grammar schools involve selection for pupils at the age of 11, which Labour opposes. "Watch my lips . . . no selection . . ." said Mr Blunkett, to the applause of delegates at last year's Labour conference.

What he now says is that only parents would be able to initiate a ballot to scrap a school. And, even then, a Labour Education Secretary would be the final arbiter in deciding whether sufficient numbers had asked for one. So, no Labour threat to selective grammar schools.

The explanation for this apparent volte-face is to be found in the Wirral constituency, where a crucial byelection is to be held next month, and where Tory campaigners are claiming that two rather good grammar schools there would be at risk under a Labour government.

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AN INQUIRY into the top-security Ashworth Hospital, on Merseyside, was launched by the Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, after he was presented with evidence of alleged paedophile activity, corruption, and the use by patients of pornography, drugs and alcohol. He also suspended the chief executive, Janice Miles, the consultant psychiatrist, Dr Ian Strickland, and two nurses.

The inquiry will centre on the hospital's personality disorder unit, which houses 115 dangerous mental patients. It was there that some 1,200 video tapes, tape-copying equipment, and thousands of pounds in cash were seized. It was also there that the eight-year-old daughter of a former patient was seen playing with a sex offender, and where inmates were alleged to have paid to be allowed to molest her. The child was taken into local authority care.

The hospital was the subject of a damning inquiry report in 1993, which found proof of organised crime, sex, drug-taking, and cruelty to patients. The current allegations are contained in a 60-page dossier compiled by an inmate who absconded last autumn, only to give himself up later, saying he had escaped only to protest against conditions in the hospital.

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THE ENTIRE London art market fell under suspicion as Sotheby's suspended two senior staff members in the wake of allegations of systematic smuggling.

Roeland Kollewjin, the company's Old Masters expert in Milan, was suspended after a clandestine television documentary recorded him promising to smuggle an 18th century painting from Italy to Britain where, it was suggested, it would fetch a better price. The other man suspended — George Gordon, a director who works in the Old Masters department in London — was filmed taking delivery of the portrait by Giuseppe Nogari.

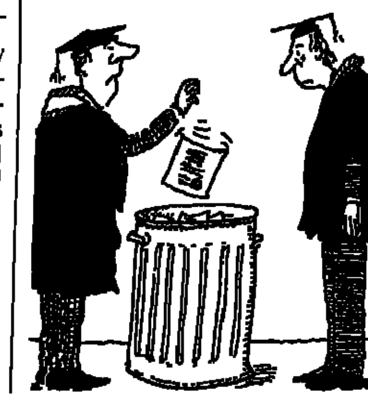
The Department of Trade and Industry launched an urgent inquiry into the implications of these allegations. Italian police claimed that London was universally recognised as the number one destination for stolen treasures.

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LUCRATIVE advertising deals in the United States and other brazen ventures were said to have raised enough money to clear the Duchess of York's £4.2 million overdraft. But financial experts estimated she might need another £1.3 million to settle her tax liabilities.

Her sister-in-law, Diana, Princess of Wales, who wrote a gushing foreword to a book by the Italian fashion designer, Gianni Versace, withdrew her support — and the foreword — when the book (to raise funds for Aids research) was found to contain photographs of naked men opposite pictures of the Royal Family.





# Labour to peg top salaries

**Guardian Reporters**

LABOUR last week raised the stakes over this year's public sector pay settlement when Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, warned that a Blair government would block implementation of both stages of the "top people's" award agreed by John Major's Cabinet last week — if it wins power before April 1. If Mr Major delays polling day until April 10 or May 1, Mr Brown would simply stop the second phase.

As teachers, nurses, doctors and dentists, and other groups whose average 3.3 per cent award will be paid in two stages — 2 per cent on April 1 and the rest on December 1 — protested at the unfairness of the Cabinet's tactics, Mr Brown focused his fire on the 2.75 to 7 per cent package proposed for judges, senior officers and higher civil servants.

Under the Treasury timetable endorsed by the Cabinet, they will get 2 per cent on April 1 — up from £104,431 to £108,192 for a High Court judge — and the remainder plus staged increases left over from 1994 on December 1.

A newly qualified NHS staff nurse will move from £11,895 to £12,230, then £12,385 by December, a similarly placed teacher from £14,001 to £14,280, and £14,663 when the full 3.3 per cent is paid. Mr Brown is committed to those rises while freezing the overall pay bill for 5 million public sector workers for at least two years.

What caught Whitehall, the military and the judiciary on the hop last week was that Mr Brown immediately made plain that, if he succeeds Kenneth Clarke before April 1, he will freeze both phases in the name of "tough but fair" restraint.

At stake is Mr Clarke's determination to squeeze public sector pay for the fourth year running by shaving £300 million off the £1.1 billion which the five review bodies' recommendations would have cost in 1997-98. Mr Brown said: "We know we will inherit a difficult position, which means that we can make no additional promises."

Christine Hancock, general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, said: "The Government has missed a golden opportunity to restore the morale of nurses by giving them what the pay review body recommended." But nurses' anger at the staging of their 3.3 per cent pay award was partly blunted by what they saw as a precious victory over local pay determination.

● Labour on Monday unveiled radical proposals for combating job insecurity when it offered all public sector workers the prospect of "employment for life" in return for greater flexibility.

With polling day looming, Labour believes that tackling job insecurity in the public sector — where 42 per cent of the staff taken on since 1992 are non-permanent — could be an electoral trump card.

The Opposition plans to make an attack on insecurity a central plank of its election campaign and will seek to end the drift towards short-term contracts and casualisation across the public sector.

Labour's approach is particularly designed to appeal to the 40 per cent of the workforce who have had to move jobs during the recession.

Traditionally job security was a key feature of public sector employment. But with no growth in budgets in the public sector over the past three years, the Government has met spending ceilings by shedding jobs.

# Spousal transmission leads to new lunacy

SKETCH
**Simon Hoggart**

SARAH HOGG is the woman who persuaded John Major to stay in the Exchange Rate Mechanism until it was too late, costing the country many billions of pounds. Her husband, Douglas, is the Agriculture Minister whose mishandling of the beef crisis has helped cost taxpayers at least £3.3 billion.

We know this because he even boasted about it. Gavin Strang, the Labour spokesman, wondered why, when Mr Hogg had met the National Farmers' Union last week, he had not told them when the beef ban would be lifted, but had instead offered them an extra £71 million to help cope with the beef crisis and "insulted" his audience by asking them to vote Conservative whilst delivering a harangue about Labour.

Mr Hogg twisted himself into a knot (he looks like a six-year-old getting ready for a tantrum) and literally spat out his reply. This is because there is a faulty valve somewhere in his salivary glands, and so each word emerges lavishly lubricated.

"I had a mosht intereshting dishcushion with the NFU. We have committed £3.3 billion, the equivalent of 2p on income tax!"

For ministers to praise themselves for spending taxpayers' money to rectify a problem entirely of their own creation is not merely chutzpah. It implies a degree of lunacy, and offers a new theory to explain mad cow disease: spousal transmission.

In Prime Minister's Questions Tony Blair set a trap and, somewhat unexpectedly, Mr Major stepped into it. It can't have been very well-made, more life Pooh's Heffalump Trap, because the Prime Minister stepped straight out again. Still, it was an achievement of sorts.

Mr Blair asked whether he could confirm that the National Debt had doubled since he had become Prime Minister. (It has.)

"I can also confirm . . ." Mr Major said. Labour MPs laughed happily at that give-away "also", but nanoseconds later he was back. (a nanosecond is defined as the period of time between the lights turning green and the idiot in the Astra behind you leaning on his horn).

"I can confirm that there is not a single economy in Europe that can match ours!" he raved.

This was another of Mr Major's — you can't really call them lies, so much as fictions, porkie pies in puff pastry. We all know that even in their present difficulties, the Germans are half as rich again as us, but he may genuinely believe the opposite is true. You could hook him up to a lie detector.

"The British economy is the most successful in Europe," he would say, and it wouldn't flicker. Thank goodness he doesn't wear Bruno Magli shoes, like O J Simpson.



# New figures question religious revival

**Madeleine Bunting and Luke Harding**

THE Church of England was dealt a sharp blow last week when new figures revealed the biggest annual drop in the number of people attending Sunday services for 20 years and painted a grim picture of decline across the board.

The statistics proved an embarrassing setback for the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, and dented the much-vaunted optimism among clergy that the fall in churchgoing had bottomed out following the battle over women priests.

Official figures show that average attendance in 1995 is now close to the psychologically significant million mark, at 1,045,000, a fall of 36,000 on 1994.

The Bishop of Wakefield, the Rt Rev Nigel McCulloch, admitted he was surprised and disappointed by the decline, but insisted that the figures did not correlate with his own experience. "We mustn't take these figures at face value. The anecdotal evidence from the parishes is that more people are coming to church but less often — perhaps once or twice a month rather than weekly. This needs to be tested with proper research," he said.

Dr Carey has built heavily on the idea that the Church had turned the corner and was tackling institutional reform more energetically. In particular, the decline undermines the centrepiece of Dr Carey's ministry — the designation of the nineties as the Decade of Evangelism and the emergence of "mission" as the ubiquitous buzzword in the Church.

The infighting continued last weekend following an outspoken attack by Lord Runcie on "dangerous rave-in-the-nave" services.

The former Archbishop of Canterbury said he was temperamentally against "clappy-and-happy, huggy-and-feely worship which seems to reduce God to a puppet". He added: "Turning worship into something fashionable, an ecclesiastical health farm, is a danger."

His intervention appears to be an implicit rebuke for Dr Carey, who has encouraged services which reflect youth culture.

The traditionalist Archdeacon of York, the Venerable George Austin, also entered the fray last week, blaming Lord Runcie himself for the decline in church-going. He accused him of promoting his own brand of "effete, liberal élitism" during his time at Lambeth Palace between 1980 and 1991, adding: "We were led for 10 years by a man who has admitted that he didn't have much spirituality or faith."

Last weekend Lord Runcie hit back, attacking the resurgent evangelical movement and the worship of what he described as "candy-floss idols". He said that rave-style services, such as the notorious Nine O'Clock Service in Sheffield, which was at the centre of a scandal when the Rev Chris Brain was accused of exploiting female worshippers, were "dreadful".

Lord Runcie's remarks left both evangelical leaders and leading consensualists within the Church distinctly unimpressed.

The Rev Gordon Fyles, a spokesman for Reform, an evangelical pressure group, said: "While there are very serious defects with the Sheffield Nine O'Clock services, the vast numbers of evangelical churches are what we call 'seeker-friendly' — trying to make the Church accessible to people who have had no prior access to or contact with the Church."

# UK has 'most racist youth'

**Stuart Millar**

BRITAIN has produced a generation of the most intolerant young people in Europe, says a survey on the attitudes of the nation's youth.

The European Youth Survey, published by the satellite music channel MTV, suggests that young Britons in the 1990s are characterised by extreme contradictions, adopting strongly conservative views on issues such as race, and law and order, while maintaining hedonistic attitudes towards sex and drugs.

Most worryingly, it indicates they are by far the most racist in Europe. Almost 30 per cent disagreed that all races are equal and 26 per cent said they would never consider dating someone of a different colour.

Similarly, less than half Britain's 16 to 24-year-olds said they were in favour of immigration — though 55 per cent agreed that multiculturalism enhanced culture.

These figures compare unfavourably with other European nations. Among Germans, the next most intolerant nation, 19 per cent disagreed that all races were equal, while in Spain only 7 per cent disagreed.

The British and the French were the most willing to commit murder, with 18 per cent in each country saying they would kill if they felt they could get away with it.

Young people in Britain also hold some of Europe's most conservative opinions on law and order. Almost 70 per cent favoured the reintroduction of the death penalty — 25 per cent above the European average.

But despite this collection of unattractive characteristics, Britons remain the third most popular people among young Europeans, after the French and Italians.

Meanwhile a report by the Institute for Public Policy Research found that many members of the Asian community in Britain are prejudiced against Afro-Caribbeans and immigrants, and are more set against inter-racial marriage than white people.

The report found that members of the Asian community said many black people were involved in crime and that they would not want a close relative to marry an Afro-Caribbean.

More Asians than any other group thought there was too much Asian and African immigration into Britain.

The survey also showed that there is still a "die-hard" core of racists among white people.

# Peers overrule home gun ban

Ewen MacAskill

THE House of Lords last week defeated a key part of the Government's handguns bill; put forward in the wake of the Dunblane massacre.

In the most significant of three defeats for the Government last week, by 153 votes to 139, peers overturned a ban on holding pistols at home, and said owners should be allowed to do so provided parts to enable the gun to fire were held at secure gun clubs. The change is almost certain to be reversed when the Firearms (Amendment) Bill returns to the Commons.

Labour said most of the peers voting for the amendment were hereditary. George Robertson, the shadow Scottish secretary, who lives in Dunblane, said: "The hereditary peers are further strengthening the case for their own abolition."

Later the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, suffered another rebuff when a Liberal Democrat move to compensate gun dealers hit by the ban on high-calibre handguns was carried by 121 votes to 110. According to official sources, this could push up the compensation bill from £150 million to £500 million. Peers also voted by 57 votes to 53 for a centralised police register of licensed firearms holders.

At the committee stage, peers voted for compensation to be paid to any gun club forced to close by the bill. The amendment on keeping guns at home was moved by Lord Pearson of Rannoch, a Tory who last month embarrassed ministers by initiating legislation for Britain's withdrawal from the European Union.

Jacqueline Walsh of the Snowdrop Petition, campaigning for a total handgun ban, said the amendment was unacceptable since the gun parts to be removed could be found elsewhere.

# A levels face big shake-up

John Carvel

A FUNDAMENTAL reform of the exam system in England and Wales, including the first thorough revamp of A levels for more than 40 years, was announced this week by the Government in an attempt to improve skills to match international competition.

As the Government seeks to assure parents that education remains one of its top priorities, it also unveiled plans to extend the use of league tables of schools' performances. The aim is to increase GCSE passes.

Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, first announced plans for a broader education after 16. Instead of embarking on a two-year A level course, most young people will sit three subjects at Advanced Subsidiary level at the end of the first year in the sixth form.

Some will continue with these subjects for a second year to secure the full A level. Others may switch to take further Advanced Subsidiary levels or vocational qualifications.

The aim will be to reduce the 30 per cent failure rate at A level without devaluing the qualification which Margaret Thatcher described as the academic "gold standard". The new approach would bring England, Wales and Northern Ireland more closely into line with the broader and more flexible system in Scotland.

The Prime Minister also committed the Government to exam league tables at ages seven and 14. They will be added to those already published at ages 16 and 18, and, for the first time next month, at 11.

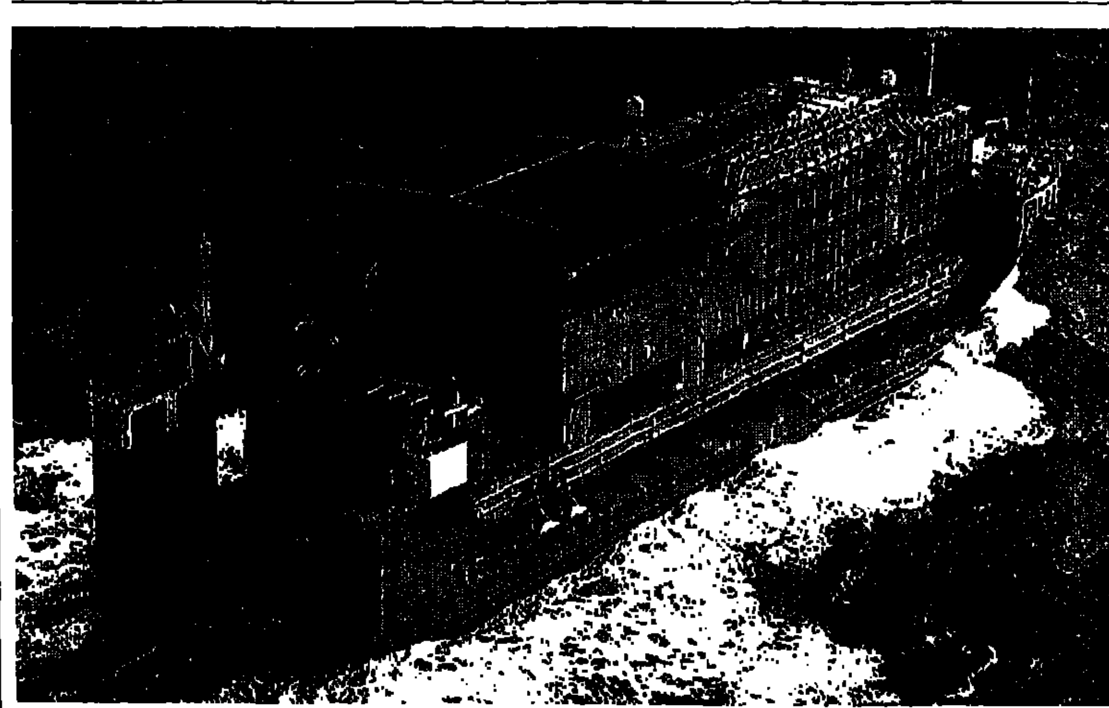
Of A level changes, Mrs Shephard said: "This will provide a positive target for students who may not complete a full A level, and it will also allow students to broaden the range of subjects they can cover."

Her package will implement most of the reforms proposed last year by Sir Ron Dearing, the Government's former chief curriculum adviser.

Mrs Shephard coupled syllabus reform with a call for a reduction in the number of exam boards setting and marking A levels. After allegations that one board increased the grades of candidates from famous public schools last summer, she will insist on further mergers to stop boards lowering their standards to win more business.

The Government has ruled out nationalising the system by creating a single examinations authority, but Mrs Shephard wants only two or three rival boards and a drastic reduction in the number of competing syllabuses.

Her proposals for A level reform are expected to attract Labour support and stand a good chance of implementation.



All aboard . . . A former Falklands barracks ship, the Resolution, which the Prison Service says it needs to house 500 low security inmates as mainland jails runs out of space. But the emergency plans received a setback when councillors for Portland harbour, near Weymouth in Dorset, rebelled and complained it would be an eyesore that would destroy tourism. They are set to fight the floating jail plan

## In Brief

THE HOME Secretary has officially confirmed that Moors murderer Myra Hindley will remain in prison for the rest of her life. Her lawyers claimed that his decision was unlawful and said they would seek to challenge it. Meanwhile Ian Brady, the other Moors murderer, has called for the right to take his own life.

THE Government's new miscarriage of justice commission was urged to investigate claims that Carole Hanson, who died last week, spent 27 years in jail for a murder she did not commit.

SIR JOHN KERR, Britain's ambassador to the United States, is leaving his post early to become head of the diplomatic service in London.

A JUDGE ordered 14-year-old Brian Smith to be detained indefinitely for battering to death nine-year-old Jade Matthews on a Merseyside railway last year.

THE PRO-LIFE Alliance unveiled plans to field up to 70 anti-abortion candidates against opposition MPs at the election.

RADIOACTIVITY leaked from storage tanks into rainwater overflows at Sellafield in Cumbria — the second time in a week that the nuclear plant has faced an emergency.

A NEW ZEALAND woman who lost her unborn child and nearly her life after cervical cancer was not diagnosed on a routine smear test won £60,305 damages against Wiltshire and Bath health authority.

HEALTH authorities appeared to rule out a national screening system for prostate cancer after researchers said it would fail to detect most men with the disease while creating needless anxiety for thousands.

A ROGUE infected carcass is suspected of causing the latest Scottish *E. coli* outbreak in Arbroath. One woman has been killed and another is dangerously ill in hospital.

FOURTEEN-year-old Carl Rickard, who was battered with an iron bar outside his school on January 24, has died. Three boys, all aged 15, appeared in court on the day before his death accused of attempted murder.

PAUL WARD, aged 32, has been charged with murdering the award-winning investigative crime journalist, Veronica Guerin, in Dublin last year.

THE Government is to contribute £43 million towards the cost of rebuilding the centre of Manchester which was devastated by an IRA bomb last June.

# New danger for ceasefire

David Sharrock

THE loyalist ceasefire in Northern Ireland was under intense pressure this week after the IRA abandoned a 1,000lb bomb in Strabane, west Tyrone.

The bomb had a command wire and firing pack attached and was packed into three 40-gallon barrels. It had been left on waste ground beside the Fir Trees Hotel.

Detective Inspector Mervyn Hood said: "Had this device exploded the devastation would have been tremendous. There would have been widespread damage to buildings and huge loss of life."

Police believe the IRA's intention was to explode the bomb as a security patrol passed nearby.

Last week the IRA briefed journalists in Dublin and denied its run of aborted or failed operations amounted to a "phoney war". It all but ruled out another ceasefire before the general election.

A few hours earlier, a police officer was slightly injured when an explosive device was thrown at a patrol in the Co Tyrone village of Pomeroy. In the past week there have also been attacks on RUC vehicles in Dungannon, Co Tyrone and Lurgan, Co Armagh.

The upsurge in violence coincided with new stirrings of peace overtures, sparked by comments made by the chairman of the Conservative Northern Ireland backbench committee, Andrew Hunter.

Last weekend the Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, said he wanted to discuss a "time frame" for his party's entry into talks. He was prepared to sign up to the Mitchell principles of democratic methods.

Mr Hunter said: "The Government made it quite clear that there was still a line of communication between it and the Provisionals if they want to use it." But he added: "Dialogue has to be meaningful and based upon an unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire, and there is nothing to talk about while the Provisionals are still intent on continuing their violence."

● Tighter security measures at Westminster were announced by the Commons authorities on Monday because of the "high level of threat from the IRA", the Serjeant at Arms, Peter Jennings, said.

# Tories at odds on devolution

Ewen MacAskill

CABINET confusion over Scottish devolution was exposed this week when the Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, suggested a future Scottish parliament could be abolished.

This was at odds with the views of the Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, who reiterated that the Tories will not seek to reverse a Scottish parliament if a Labour government creates one. He said: "Once Humpty Dumpty falls off the wall, he will not be put back together again no matter how many of the king's horses and the king's men turn up."

Mr Dorrell, tipped as a candidate for the Tory leadership if John Major loses the general election, attempted to undo the damage by claiming his comments had been misinterpreted. The row is a setback for Mr Dorrell, who was appointed by Mr Major to make the case against Labour's devolution plans.

The key to the difference between Mr Dorrell and Mr Forsyth is strategy. Mr Forsyth has been trying to frighten Scottish voters by saying a vote for a Scottish parliament would be final, while Mr Dorrell suggested it could be undone.

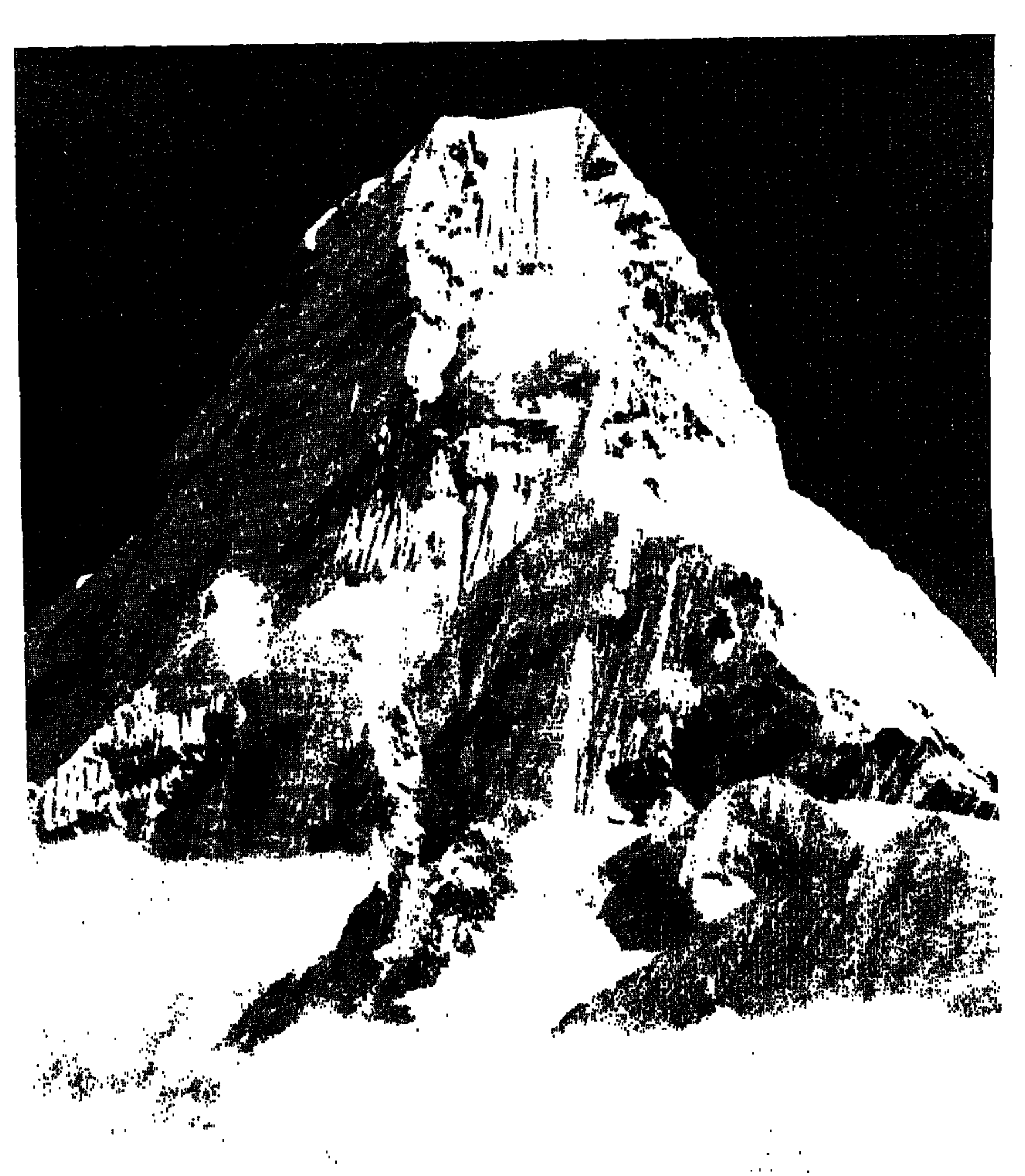
Any Conservative attempt to dismantle a Scottish parliament would defy the result of a referendum to be held later this year if Labour wins the election. The referendum would ask Scots if they want a parliament and if they want it to have tax-raising powers.

Labour leader Tony Blair said: "If they [the Scottish people] vote for it, it would be quite extraordinary if the Conservative party wanted to try and wreck that."

Mr Dorrell made his comment to the Scotsman newspaper, whose reporter said: "What you seem to be saying really is that if for whatever reason this parliament comes about, the best route to ensure that our arrangements remain intact is to get rid of it again, rather than . . ."

Mr Dorrell interrupted: "Yes, absolutely." He said later he had not used the word abolish. "I said that a Scottish parliament that was set up on the half-baked basis that Labour currently proposes is one that raises a whole series of unanswered questions which a Labour government would have to address."









Guardian editor **Alan Rusbridger** on the case that could and should have changed the law, but didn't

# Britain enjoys only a half-free press

JUSTICE was done in the High Court last week. A jury backed an honest reporter doing the work a reporter should. We toasted those 12 men and women at the Guardian. Their instincts about the case were right and true.

But there was no toast to the judge or the law. The trial — which could have cost the paper nearly £750,000 ($1.2 million) — should never have happened. It would never have happened in countries which do more than mouth platitudes about press freedom.

If, at the end of a trial we won, we say that the case was an accident of justice, that is only partly a reflection on the judge, Mr Justice French, who presided (after a manner) over the trial. It is also a reflection on other judges before him who have seemed to care little about the press's role in a free society. It is a reflection on Parliament, which has tinkered with the law of libel but never reformed it. And it is a reflection on all in society who do little to nurture or protect the freedom of expression they affect to care about.

The immediate and most localised effect of the judgment in *Bennett and Others vs The Guardian* is that editors may be bolder in reporting on cases of suspected corruption in public life. In recent years one trade union — the Police Federation — has succeeded in stifling much fair reporting and comment about a subject of vital concern.

During the 33 months to March 1996 (the latest figures available) the Police Federation fought — and won — 95 such actions for defamation, recovering £1,567,000 in damages. Small local papers and magazines routinely cave in, knowing that they cannot possibly afford the cost of going to trial.

Last week's victory for the Guardian should change that climate a little. But that is entirely due to the jury. The signal from the courts remains the same: they will do little to protect you if you engage in robust investigations of people in public life. Do not come bleating to judges about the public's right to know or the public interest. They do not want to know.

The cause of the action dated back more than five years to two carefully researched articles about unnamed police officers who were being investigated for corruption in a troubled inner-city area of London.

Duncan Campbell, an experienced and respected crime correspondent, had been investigating allegations of corruption at Stoke Newington police station since October 1991. He had spoken to convicted drug dealers, to local solicitors and to a former police officer, all of whom had either specific allegations or broad concerns about officers at the station.

Campbell also met with the man heading the inquiry, Detective Superintendent Ian Russell. By the time the Guardian ran articles, there was a major inquiry into the station, with five officers working under Russell. One detective constable had already been charged with theft and fraud.

On January 28, 1992, Scotland Yard issued a press statement saying that eight Stoke Newington officers had been transferred to other stations. That single act was virtually unprecedented in the Metropolitan Police, and the news spread like wildfire from station to station. Campbell wrote two pieces about the transfer of the — unnamed — officers, together with background material he had accumulated during his investigation. No officers complained about those articles at the time.

The inquiry went on to become one of the biggest inquiries into police corruption undertaken by the Police Complaints Authority (PCA). Sir Peter Imbert, then Metropolitan Police Commissioner, described them as "the most serious allegations of police corruption for 20 years".

In time, one of the Guardian's main sources for the original pieces had her conviction quashed on appeal. Another source received a five-figure sum in damages, and 13 people convicted on the evidence of officers from the police station had their convictions overturned by the Court of Appeal.

In a further 20 cases, the Crown Prosecution Service offered no evidence. In all, more than £500,000 in damages was paid by the Metropolitan Police as a result of civil actions taken against officers from Stoke Newington.

You might think that there could be little that was controversial about a serious newspaper reporting on events of this importance and scale, especially if the officers were not named. We have seen what has happened in inner-city areas where confidence in the police — and the regulation of the police — has broken down.

Lord Scarman's report after the Brixton riots of 1981 makes much of this: "Unless and until there is a system for judging complaints against the police which commands the support of the public, there will be no way in which the atmosphere of distrust and suspicion between the police and the community in places like Brixton can be dispelled."

Unfortunately, the Police Federation has a different view of what should and should not be reported about the police. It has access to a huge fighting fund for legal actions of all sorts. In 1995, it spent no less than £5.2 million of its £7.7 million revenue on legal services. The libel actions by police are known in the force as "garage actions", since the average damages are just enough to build a nice extension.

The tactics employed by the Federation in this case were textbook stuff. They waited until two years and 51 weeks had passed — a week before the cut-off point for launching a libel action — before issuing writs on behalf of the eight officers who had been suspended and who had never been named by the Guardian.

Three officers did not pursue their actions, for reasons the court never heard. That left five, who by then had been cleared of any wrongdoing by the PCA.

The fact that the Guardian had not named these men counted for little in court. All submitted statements from relatives or colleagues saying that *they* had recognised the people to whom the articles referred. Out of a Guardian readership of more than a million, perhaps 300 readers knew their identity — and they would, of course, have been the very people most likely to have been in the know.

And so the slow and expensive wheels of libel were set in motion. The Guardian considered an important principle was at stake. We considered our reporter should be defended. He had reported the story fairly and accurately and had even tried to assist the original inquiry.



PHOTOMONTAGE: ROGER TOOTH

TWO senior policemen — Superintendent Russell and former Deputy Assistant Commissioner Michael Taylor — would give evidence on his, and the paper's, behalf. So would the Chairman of the PCA. Even though — after two false starts — the costs were already approaching £500,000, we thought we should fight.

It is at this point that the peculiarities of the English libel law began to bite. We had hoped to be able to argue qualified privilege: that is, that the community had an equal interest in receiving the information as we had in publishing it. If we had so succeeded, the policemen would have had to prove that Campbell was being malicious or reckless as to the truth of what he wrote.

Mr Justice French turned out not to be interested in whether or not it was in the interests of the public to know about allegations of police corruption or whether the Guardian had a duty or right to pass on the information. During the course of some somewhat rambling and error-strewn judgments he struck out that defence, together with much of our evidence.

He went further. He ruled that the Guardian could make no mention of anything that happened after the articles were published. We could say nothing about the subsequent vindication of our main sources. To the jury, they may have simply looked like the malicious claims of convicted drug dealers. We could convey little idea of the scope of the police inquiry, or the damages the police finally paid out. We could not point out that one officer at the centre of the allegations, DC Roy Lewandowski, had been jailed for 18 months.

The judge's decision to exclude any evidence of events following the publication — with the exception of the plaintiffs' evidence that they had been cleared — was backed by the Court of Appeal. By the end of the trial, the jury could be forgiven for thinking that the Guardian had been making mischief and that there never had been any public disquiet about the station.

The judge's summing-up would certainly have reinforced that impression. It dealt extensively with the policemen's case and made only nodding reference to the Guardian's defence. Mr Justice French, who appeared to be having difficulty following some of the legal arguments, managed to avoid mentioning any of the Guardian's witnesses, save for a solitary sentence from Campbell in which he referred to the size of the Guardian's readership.

In America and other countries with a more developed sense of the balance between free expression and individual dignity, the case would never have come to court. That is largely thanks to a Supreme Court ruling in 1964, which fundamentally changed the law of libel in order to allow the media to report on, and comment on, public life.

The ruling of Justice William J Brennan in *New York Times v Sullivan* was a ringing defence of the right — and duty — of a free press to report freely on matters of public importance of a sort that it is hard to imagine coming from any English judge. As in the Guardian case, Sullivan concerned an unnamed police official. At the original trial, the man — Police Commissioner L B Sullivan of Montgomery, Kansas — collected $500,000 in damages from the New York Times.

In upholding the Times's appeal, Brennan revolutionised American libel law, even allowing newspapers to make false statements uttered in the heat of debate, providing they were not maliciously made. Brennan said, among other things:

❑ "Debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust and wide open and . . . it may well include vehement, caustic and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials."

❑ Newspapers faced with the possibility of huge libel damages might well succumb to a "pall of fear and timidity" and tone down any criticism of public officials. The threat of massive costs "dampens the vigour and limits the variety of public debate".

❑ Public officials would in future have to prove actual malice: ie, the plaintiff would have to prove the reporter was reckless as to whether what he or she was writing was true or not.

SUBSEQUENT rulings have made it clear that any police officers with the power to make arrests should be classed as "public figures".

The European Court of Human Rights has also gone much further than England in allowing criticism of public figures. A test case, *Lingens v Austria*, found that a libel award against a commentator was a breach of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights because it would deter journalists from contributing to public discussion of issues affecting the community.

Some jurists believe that *Sullivan* tilts the balance too far in favour of the press. They point to judgments in other countries which have managed to achieve a better equilibrium. But most lawyers are agreed that British libel laws are out of step with the trend in international law and inhibit public debate.

To say all this is not to excuse the press, which must take its share of blame for the current indifference to the vital role it has to play in the public life of Britain. Too many papers have behaved in too cavalier a fashion, confusing the public interest with what interests the public. They have brought us to the brink of legislation which will further shackle an already half-free press.

But Britain's judges and politicians must wake up to the way in which the cost, the risk and the balance of the present state of the law all militate against honest reporting by responsible newspapers and broadcasting organisations.

*Bennett and Others v Guardian Newspapers Ltd* could have been the case that helped push back the limitations on the press in Britain. It hasn't done that. But the 12 men and women of the jury had a better sense of justice and freedom of speech than the lawyers. They recognised a good and decent reporter — known as such by police officers the length of the land — and protected him.





## Nawaz Sharif's landslide

WHO WILL GUIDE Pakistan's democracy after the sweeping success of Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League? The unexpected size of his victory over Benazir Bhutto gives him the strength to take on the president and generals whose version of "guided democracy" has dominated the past eight years — if he dares. But the huge number of non-voters suggests that most Pakistanis have adopted a more sceptical view.

Mr Sharif's supporters were busy last week claiming that the result gives the green light to democracy. They argue that he offers a modern alternative to the semi-feudal Pakistan People's Party of Ms Bhutto, and the prospect of evolving towards full parliamentary rule. If this is really so, then Mr Sharif has the chance to prove it very soon. Last month the Supreme Court upheld the power to dismiss elected governments — by virtue of the notorious Eighth Amendment dating back to the era of direct military rule — which was used by President Farooq Leghari to remove Ms Bhutto last November (and had previously been employed against Mr Sharif in 1993). The Court ruled that this amendment can only be removed by a two-thirds majority in parliament. Mr Sharif now has the strength to persuade the smaller parties to join him in doing so. He could also press for abolition of the new Council for Defence and National Security set up by Mr Leghari in January. This supposedly "advisory" body gives the military its first formal say in government affairs. Opponents of Mr Sharif claim he struck a secret deal with Mr Leghari under which he would be allowed to regain power as long as he listened to the Council. Instead of saying weakly that parliament should "wait and see" how the Council behaves, he could scotch the rumour fast by taking action. For a politician who began his career as a protégé of the dictator General Zia ul-Haq, it would be quite a test of his resolve.

Another way in which Mr Sharif could prove he is a modern capitalist alternative to the populist feudalism of the PPP would be to revive the abortive attempt of Ms Bhutto's father to carry out a genuine land reform and break the power base of the landowners. Mr Sharif is likely to do little more than tinker with the question by offering more rural credit: his own party is after all also heavily dependent upon cash and blocks of votes delivered by loyal landlords. There is less doubt about his intention of implementing the "tough" reforms already instituted (under pressure from the International Monetary Fund) by Mr Leghari — which will do nothing to improve the daily lot of most Pakistanis.

What are we to think of Ms Bhutto? Her tarnished record and dubious connections have made her the author of most of her misfortunes. But she has also suffered domestically for daring to be a woman, and abroad from criticism that is sometimes tinged with malice. While denouncing the result, her reaction to defeat was more sober than had been predicted by her enemies. She wished Mr Sharif good luck and offered her cooperation "in creating stability in the country". To some extent this is an acknowledgement of the PPP's new weakness, reduced from national status to that of virtually a provincial party. But Ms Bhutto may also reckon that if Mr Sharif is at all inclined to do what is needed to strengthen democracy, then even now he may need her help.

## Double sword of justice

THE SECOND O J Simpson trial was unlike the first in almost every possible way: the case was already in the public domain; it was a civil action with a lesser burden of proof; there was a different mix of evidence; the judge took a different view on crucial issues of admissibility; and the jury was predominantly white rather than black. Last and not least, it was not on TV.

It is unwise to conclude that this time justice has been done, and we should resist the temptation to become instant experts. All that can be said with confidence is that the evidence presented this time, in another forum with so many different features from the first — and on a lower standard of probability — pointed strongly in the direction of the verdict which was returned (and by unanimous rather than majority vote). The plaintiffs for Simpson's wife Nicole and her friend Ronald Goodman had the considerable advantage of knowing in advance the main lines of the defence. They were able to take pretrial depositions from witnesses — a practice not allowed in criminal proceedings. These built up a mosaic of incriminating (though mostly circumstantial) detail which the defence was unable to demolish. The plaintiffs also benefited from the trial judge's refusal to admit the evidence of racist utterances by Detective Mark Fuhrman, which had so strongly swayed the criminal trial jury. Most of all, they were able to put Simpson himself on the stand and to focus on inconsistencies in his account. Instead of the gloves, there were the shoes — which Mr Simpson denied possessing till photos were produced. This was not conclusive evidence but it did his credibility no good at all.

The suggestion that the verdict in the first trial was influenced by the colour of the jurors is itself wholly unproven. They found against a prosecution case that was poorly presented, and for an accused who was brilliantly defended in the best (or worst) barnstorming tradition of the American courtroom. It was clear that the reaction to the outcome of that trial had a strong racial connotation, with cheering in black streets and dismay in white saloon bars. The more muted response last week on both sides of the racial divide has much to do with the passage of time and the absence of TV coverage.

Cases where civil damages are sought against a defendant who has been acquitted in criminal proceedings are still rare. There appears to be a subjective risk of double jeopardy, however distinct the actions may be in legal terms. But the real constraint will be an economic one. Few aggrieved families can afford to take action, and not many defendants have the funds that would make a successful suit financially worthwhile. Perhaps it is just as well. This case has been distinguished by an excess of money as well as of media hype — a combination more likely to produce good theatre than good justice.

## A shot out of season

WHO KILLED the bears? I, said Viktor Chernomyrdin, Russia's prime minister and the West's favourite successor to Boris Yeltsin. He has been visiting Washington to discuss Nato, scientific co-operation, and the Clinton-Yeltsin summit next month. Mr Chernomyrdin has not been a dynamic speaker on these subjects. But killing bears is another matter. In an interview broadcast on Russian national television just before he left for the US, Mr Chernomyrdin spoke with some passion. "I love hunting, I really love hunting," he explained, "so it is with pleasure that I went when I had a free moment." Nor was he the slightest abashed by the unsporting circumstances that Ogonyok magazine had revealed. The bears in question — a mother and two cubs — had been spotted by officials in a village north of Moscow hibernating in their den. The prime minister was whisked there by helicopter, the bears were woken from their deep sleep — and summarily shot. It was, he said, "a normal thing to do".

Mr Chernomyrdin is himself regarded in some Western quarters as a sort of Russian bear: representing a state which may no longer be communist but still offers a potential threat to its nearest neighbours. That is the logic of Nato expansion with which this paper disagrees — in very good company that now includes the grand old diplomat of US-Soviet relations, George Kennan. Writing in the New York Times, Mr Kennan said last week that to expand the treaty would be "the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-Cold War era". He regards the possibility of future military conflict with Russia as fanciful, unforeseeable and improbable. The decision to spread the Nato umbrella eastwards will only inflame anti-Western tendencies in Moscow and make it difficult, if not impossible, to secure the Duma's ratification of the Start-2 treaty on nuclear reductions.

Not all those who believe on the contrary that Nato should expand are suggesting that the old Soviet bear still has claws. That seemed even less likely last week when the Russian defence minister described his armed forces as in a "horrifying state" of decay. Mr Chernomyrdin says he wants the US to put the cold war behind it and address the new, not the old, Russian generation. It would help if he behaved rather more like New Russian Man himself: the last Soviet leader who passionately enjoyed shooting bears was . . . Leonid Brezhnev.

# Many graduates make light work

Martin Woollacott

IS THE age of mass higher education over only a few years after it was proclaimed? Yes, if you believe the evidence last week put before the committee looking into the future of British universities, to the effect that Britain already has enough graduates. No, if you listened to President Clinton's state of the union message, in which he called for an educational "national crusade", following his stated objective of making a 13th and 14th year of education — the first two years of college — as universal as the first 12.

This transatlantic contrast is an example of the way in which education in modern democracies is always both a problem and a solution. It is a problem because it raises expectations it does not necessarily fulfil, and it is a solution because, even so, it offers hope, that most valuable political commodity. All over the world, investment in education is offered as a solution to individual aspiration, to the achievement of national economic success, and to a renaissance of values. Yet there is within the educational appeal a knot of contradictions.

Forty years ago, David Eccles was the first British minister to operate on the basis that everybody agreed that educational spending was an investment in the economy and in competitiveness. In the post-second world war period, every Western country has increased spending and expanded higher education on that basis. Yet the results of this international expansion have not proved the case with any completeness.

The evidence that was put before the committee inquiring into the future of higher education in Britain simply noted that the number of graduates who were under-employed was increasing and the justification for further public spending was therefore unclear. The wonder is not that the over-supply of graduates comes into the debate in this form, but that it has taken so long.

In 1993, Oxford reported a worrying percentage of graduates taking manual and low-level clerical jobs, yet a year later the Confederation of British Industries was still calling for increased higher education as "vital to the economic prosperity of the United Kingdom".

In 1994, French student demonstrations were triggered by Edouard Balladur's plan to cut the minimum wage — the minimum wage that at least some of them expected to be getting paid after graduation, such was the diminution in their prospects that had taken place.

The latest, dismal employment figures from Germany suggest that, even though it is ordinary workers who will take the brunt, new German graduates may soon face hard times. In Europe generally, governments are tempted to keep unemployment down by putting more young people into higher education and training only to find, a few years later, that this recreates the problem in a different form.

In America, Bush, like Clinton, wanted to be known as the "education president", but graduate under-employment, not of Ivy League graduates but of those coming out of ordinary colleges, was already becoming a phenomenon, even if not on the European scale. The better jobs are still "worth" the increasing amount of money that a degree costs, especially as Clinton is now planning to reduce that cost.

As George Will argued in an article on the rising cost of ordinary colleges: "The public keeps buying . . . because it is still a good bargain. The difference between the lifetime earnings of a college graduate and a non-graduate is substantially more than the cost of getting the degree." Indeed, the president puts a figure on it: those with two years of college education earn a quarter of a million dollars more over their lifetimes than those who never went to college. So, if you take away the cost of even the most expensive college, you are still left with a clear average profit of, say, $150,000.

The question is not only for how much longer will the average degree be "worth it", but whether assessing education in this mercenary way is not, in itself, an indication of how devalued the concept has become politically.

This is not only in terms of individual beneficiaries. The inadequacy of the skills revolution idea as an international solution arises from the fact that it envisages too many losers, among nations and within nations. What would the consequences for other nations be of an America, or any other country, which had taken over more and more of the new kind of work not tied by national frameworks in the old way? The South Koreans are said to be aiming for a target of 80 per cent of their young people in higher education by the turn of the century, a target which seems almost insane. Higher education becomes then neither a true education for life, nor the means of social mobility, which has always constituted one of its attractions.

INSTEAD, it is all but openly proffered as the means to escape the social demotion that it is feared may be coming for individuals and countries. Or, as Clinton puts it, it is a means to bridge "the great Continental Divide between those who will prosper and those who will not in the new economy".

Such anxieties have everywhere fuelled the expansion of higher education. But that expansion, with the consequent fall in standards and the looming possibility of a local or international oversupply, cannot guarantee what used to be a graduate's prerogatives. It also tends to the division or redivision of higher education into an élite sector, which perhaps can guarantee escape, and a true mass sector, which cannot.

How a message that is essentially about large numbers of people losing can be politically popular is not such a mystery. Most will imagine that *their* children can be among the winners, or be mistily borne along by the notion, once encouraged by Harold Wilson, when he said that he wished all children could go to grammar schools, that somehow what are essentially positional goods can be enjoyed by all. What can be enjoyed by all, an education that links study with work and citizenship, is made more difficult by a calculus that over-emphasises economic advantage, whether that of the individual or the nation.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 16 1997

# Korean scandal has politicians on run

Chris Barrie in Seoul

THE financial scandal seeping out of the Hanbo group is causing waves within South Korea's government and banking community that threaten to wash up against the steps of the Blue House, the presidency, itself.

The problems besetting the country's 14th largest conglomerate have exceeded even South Koreans' worst fears, in a country used to political and commercial sleaze.

Last week, the presidents of two leading banks, Shin Kwang-shik of the Korea First Bank and Woo Chan-mok of the Chohung Bank, were arrested and accused of accepting bribes of $470,000 each for advancing loans to Hanbo. This week, the net was spread wider as prosecutors sought arrest warrants for two ruling party members, including a close associate of President Kim Young-sam.

All those summoned face questioning over how Hanbo's largest offshoot, a steel company, collapsed three weeks ago with debts of $6 billion. Other Hanbo subsidiaries have followed and the group's founder, Chung Tae-soo, has been arrested amid allegations that bribes were paid to bankers and politicians to secure loans from 61 banks and financial institutions.

With rumours circulating that further cases may emerge before the presidential elections later this year, the government and opposition are at loggerheads over the affair.

Street sentiment is of weary cynicism. Corruption has been part of Korean officialdom since the early 1970s when the regime of former general and president Park Chung Hee began to repress dissent. Mr Park built the modern Korean economy by controlling business through the civil service and the banks.



Shin Kwang-shik of the Korea First Bank, arrested on suspicion of accepting bribes PHOTOGRAPH: YONHAP

The financial system became an extension of the finance ministry, and scarce capital was advanced only for ventures which bureaucrats considered deserving. Commercial risk assessment was unknown. Bank presidents were, and in some cases still are, appointed from the Ministry of Finance and Economy, to which they often aspire to return. This web of state and financial sectors, of politics and hot money, lends itself to corruption.

And the country's financial institutions are immature — like its political democracy.

Dr Cho Yoon-je, senior counsellor to the deputy prime minister, said Korea's economy had grown as much in 30 years as the British economy had over 300 years. "Our institutions and systems have not caught up that rapidly," he said.

The government is under pressure from senior businessmen to act. Lee Chan-ho, managing director finance of the LG Electronics group, said last week that Korea needed a new financial system. Without reform, industry's ability to grow would be limited by the inadequacies of the banking sector while the state would suffer from further corruption. He said: "Everyone knows what is needed. The problem is that no one decides to practise it."

The government points to past reform, such as the liberalising of interest rates, as evidence of its willingness to move ahead.

The Bank of Korea also recognises that its supervisory role is under scrutiny. The Bank has quietly instituted an internal inquiry into what happened over the supervision of banks lending to Hanbo.

One Western banker said Hanbo may be the beginning of the end for the loans edifice upon which the country's big groups are based. "Fundamentally, too much has been won here too quickly. It is all on borrowed money," he said.

"The bubble may be about to burst. Is Hanbo the only case?"

## In Brief

THE dollar faces turbulent dealings on the market as traders react to strong signals from the Group of Seven, the world's leading economic powers, that it may be time to cool the heat generated by the US currency's recent rapid rise.

PEPSICO unveiled an 85 per cent drop in fourth-quarter profits due to losses in its international beverage business and slumping sales at the Pizza Hut and Taco Bell chains. It earned $28 million compared with $181 million a year earlier.

THE UK electricity industry could face a $1.6 billion bill after the Pension Ombudsman ordered the National Grid to repay $75 million to the company's retirement scheme.

BRITISH TELECOM unveiled profits estimated at $170 a second with sales of more than $18 billion in the last nine months of 1996.

APPLE has appointed its two legendary founders, Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, to its executive committee to help the struggling computer company.

THE threat to Ford's Halewood factory on Merseyside was lifted after talks with unions produced a commitment to build a new model car there after the Escort production moves to Germany and Spain.

BRITISH Airways celebrated 10 years as a public company with a jump in profit from $870 million to $930 million for the nine months to December 31.

MORGAN Stanley and Dean Witter announced a record $10 billion merger that will create the world's largest financial services company.

BRITISH companies have increased sharply their cash donations to charity but cut the amount of non-monetary help they give, according to the Directory of Social Change.

## FOREIGN EXCHANGES

| | Sterling rates February 10 | Sterling rates February 3 |
|---|---|---|
| Australia | 2.1565-2.1592 | 2.1015-2.1041 |
| Austria | 19.02-19.05 | 18.62-18.64 |
| Belgium | 55.77-55.87 | 54.58-54.68 |
| Canada | 2.2060-2.2082 | 2.1646-2.1667 |
| Denmark | 10.30-10.31 | 10.09-10.10 |
| France | 9.12-9.13 | 8.94-8.95 |
| Germany | 2.7041-2.7074 | 2.6467-2.6495 |
| Hong Kong | 12.64-12.65 | 12.48-12.49 |
| Ireland | 1.0183-1.0202 | 1.0103-1.0122 |
| Italy | 2,657-2,661 | 2,614-2,617 |
| Japan | 200.52-200.74 | 196.15-196.40 |
| Netherlands | 3.0369-3.0395 | 2.9762-2.9765 |
| New Zealand | 2.3868-2.3898 | 2.3394-2.3426 |
| Norway | 10.70-10.71 | 10.47-10.49 |
| Portugal | 271.50-271.83 | 266.04-266.69 |
| Spain | 228.68-228.95 | 225.03-225.25 |
| Sweden | 11.99-12.01 | 11.74-11.76 |
| Switzerland | 2.3310-2.3340 | 2.2885-2.2919 |
| USA | 1.6329-1.6339 | 1.6114-1.6124 |
| ECU | 1.3903-1.3948 | 1.3690-1.3705 |

FTSE100 Share Index up 49.9 at 4307.7. FTSE 250 Index up 23.0 at 4696.7. Gold down $3.05 at $341.25.

# Huge rise in German jobless

Ian Traynor in Bautzen

A RECORD rise in German unemployment of more than 500,000 in a month has left Günther Anders, standing in the rain in this small eastern town, confident of only one thing: that he will never work again.

He is almost certainly right. As Germany struggles with the worst levels of joblessness since the 1930s, eastern towns such as Bautzen are sunk in bitterness and gloom. The bulk of the middle-aged generation feels it has been written out of the jobs equation, while young people complete apprenticeships only to join the long dole queues.

"I suppose I'm what you'd call an early pensioner," said Mr Anders, aged 54, a joiner and former factory hand who has been out of work for four years. "Nowadays here it's all short-term contracts and part-time work. There's such insecurity. There's no hope."

The German jobless figures soared to an official 4.66 million in January, the federal labour office announced last week, stunning politicians, analysts and the media. The figure, unadjusted, was more than half a million up on December, an increase of 1.4 per cent to 12.2 per cent, and the biggest recorded monthly increase. The seasonally adjusted level rose by 160,000, triple that predicted by economists.

The new jobless figures come at a critical time for the country, for Chancellor Helmut Kohl and for Europe. Even if the German economy is flagging, it remains Europe's powerhouse. And in the period for deciding who is fit to join a single European currency in 1999, the cash-strapped government's projections for the economy this year are colliding with the reality of mass unemployment which will soak up more public spending and mean cuts elsewhere to qualify for European monetary union.

But if the unemployment rate of about 11 per cent in western Germany is alarming, in the former communist east the official figure of 18 per cent masks the real picture. In the Saxon town of Bautzen, near the Czech border, the figure was 21 per cent, up 3.5 per cent in one month. The shops and cafés are virtually deserted as people feel the pinch.

A further 14 per cent are in retraining programmes with only slight hopes of finding work later. Then there are school-leavers in apprenticeships and job training who will soon register for the dole.

Confronted with record unemployment this time last year, Mr Kohl pledged to halve the jobless rate by the century's end. Since then those hopes have evaporated as new dismal records are set.

# Pyramids of despair

Helena Smith

THE road to Albania's economic integration in Europe is dangerously potholed. The furore over pyramid investment schemes has exposed the fragility of free enterprise in a country emerging from a highly centralised political system. Their collapse highlights how criminality has become a way of life.

Europe's poorest country, after five years of democracy, remains chronically paralysed.

The drive from the Albanian capital, Tirana, to Greece, its only European Union neighbour, shows why the scams could have such sway. In rural areas economic activity stops with the roadside kiosk and petrol station.

In Ballsh, the erstwhile home of oil production, the refinery differs little from the burnt-out cars.

A little further down the road towards the southern town of Vlore, scene of Monday's violent riots, lean women in white headscarves toil the fields. Men in big, flashy Swiss-registered cars shoot by. The women, you are told, are growing hashish and the men in the big cars are trading it. It is estimated that about 50 per cent of the funds poured into the pyramids came from abroad and from "dirty" money reaped in the fields of the south.

The cultivation of hashish began four years ago when Greeks and Italians allegedly introduced the "seed" to Albanians. Growers say that profits are assured from Europe's ever-expanding drug markets. Shipments are taken in high-speed launches to Greece and Italy where Albanians are known to have mafia links.

Under pressure from the West, President Sali Berisha and his virulently rightwing Democratic Party recently passed tough legislation to clamp down on the trade, but corrupt and poorly paid officials do little to control it.

Drugs have transformed towns like Vlore, where mass protests over the pyramids erupted last week. There are fears that Albania could become Europe's Colombia.

Under its first democratic government, Albania has looked good on paper. It is the biggest recipient in Eastern Europe of EU aid — about $340 million annually. It has been hailed as perhaps the most vibrant economy in transition.

The collapse of the pyramid schemes has been a mortal blow to Albania's economic reputation abroad. Close to $2 billion is believed to have been tied up in the funds.

The nation's savings have been effectively wiped out, and this will set back the rickety economy by years. The hope is that, with the collapse of the schemes, Albania will have learnt that easy money — be it in trafficking arms or hashish — is not going to earn it the respect that will bring it closer to Europe.

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Le Monde



# Unrest threatens Albania's government

Rémy Ourdan in Tirana

PRESIDENT Ali Berisha of Albania is facing his worst political crisis. The government is in turmoil following the collapse of financial companies engaged in pyramid investment schemes and the opposition is calling for its resignation.

Repression has increased people's distrust of the country's first post-communist regime which, despite its desire to appear "democratic" and "liberal", is finding it difficult to convince the public of its good intentions.

Protests by people who have lost their life savings and political demonstrations have been severely dealt with by the police, who have not only cracked down on vandals but also seized the opportunity to round up officials of the opposition Socialist Party, who could be sentenced to between three and 15 years in prison for "inciting" public disorder.

Public demonstrations are now banned in the Albanian capital, Tirana, and Berisha's use of repressive measures is beginning to worry human rights observers.

Berisha was voted into office in 1992 following the collapse of the Stalinist system that had prevailed for 45 years, but criticism of his methods is nothing new. Although European countries recognised the the 1996 parliamentary elections as valid, Socialist Party members refuse to take their seats and are calling for fresh elections. The United States has condemned intimidation and fraud, and the "intense government pressure on the courts of law and the press". A US state department memo notes that the "police are still ill-treating detainees, journalists and political opponents".

The Albanian authorities are also criticised for detaining the Socialist Party president, Fatos Nano, for the past three years. Nano, accused of "misappropriating funds", is listed by Washington and Amnesty International as a "political prisoner".

Edi Rama, an artist well-known for his outspoken criticism of the government, lies in a bed at his parents' apartment recovering from a beating handed out at a recent demonstration.

"I was about to enter the house when some men who had been waiting in the dark attacked me," he said. "They beat me over the head for a long time. I really think they wanted to kill me."

"What really drives us to despair is the European Union's attitude," said Rama. "It is backing a government that is in the process of establishing a fascistic dictatorship. Our only haven of democracy is the US embassy."

While Albania today does not resemble the country that endured Enver Hoxha's absolute terror, the opposition is furious that the West is heaping praise on Berisha. They consider the human rights violations and the collapse of the pyramid operations sufficient grounds to oust the government.

"The pyramid scandal is a political problem," said Rama, "because no private activity can exist in Albania without the government's consent."

"This was a very poor country," said Ben Blushi, editor of the daily Koha Joni. "And the government made use of the pyramid operations to improve the Albanians' daily lives. This is one reason for the government's refusal to intervene in such fraudulent practices. The other reason is that the leaders took advantage of the companies to make themselves rich. The pyramid organisations financed the election campaigns of Sali Berisha's Democratic Party."

The opposition wants an "interim government" set up and early elections organised. In 1996 it urged people to denounce electoral fraud, but the public was too concerned with improving their daily lot, and ignored the call.

"We had no luck because people don't give a damn about politics," said Kastriot Islami, the Socialist Party spokesman. "This time, Albanians have lost their money. Now it's different."

The Forum for Democracy is a coalition of seven parties from both the left and right. The aim to is to present a united front to Albanians and to the West. The Albanian opposition has been greatly inspired by the example of Serbia's Zajedno coalition.

"The opposition is trying to turn this social conflict into a political confrontation," said Alban Bala, spokesman for the ruling Democratic Party. "It's not by inflicting material damage on the state and moral damage on the Albanian people that we will settle the economic crisis. We have explicit eyewitness accounts proving that opposition leaders were egging on demonstrators to cause destruction. This is intolerable."

Shahin Kadare, member of the centre-left Democratic Alliance, countered this, pointing out that "the opposition is quite weak compared with the discontent of the people". "Sali Berisha is alone against the people," he said. "The Albanians are tired of a mafia's reign, and I fear the recent events are merely the curtain-raiser to a painful future for Albania."

(February 7)

# Judges back appeal against corruption

Anne Chemin in Paris

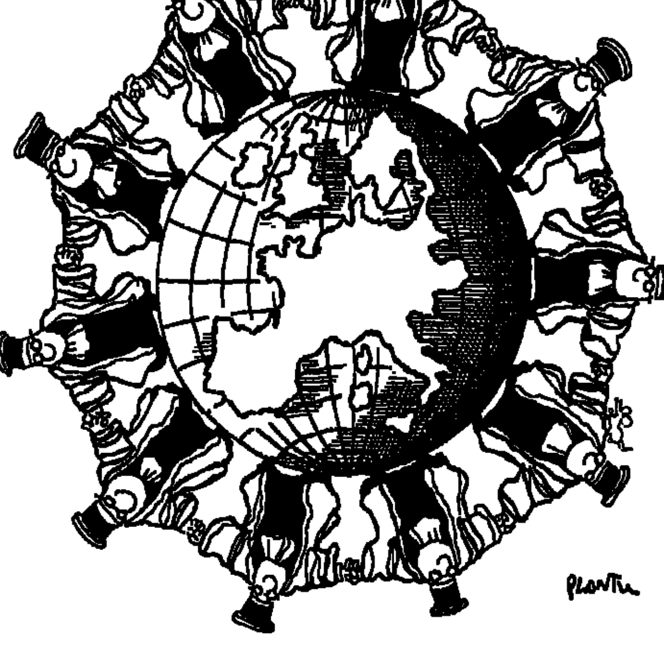
BARELY four months after seven judges met in Geneva and issued a call for more judicial co-operation within the European Union, 400 of France's 6,000 magistrates have signed a petition. The signatories represent a contingent of the judiciary strongly attached to the principle of equality in law and include leaders of magistrates' unions. The vast majority of the signatories are investigating judges, deputy public prosecutors and legal advisers.

"There is a kind of controlled anger in the face of the inequality of treatment between petty offenders, with whom the judicial system is largely occupied, and big-time financial crime, which largely enjoys complete immunity," says Laurent Beccaria, a publisher's literary adviser and chairman of the Equality in Law association set up to support the judges' appeal.

Last December, Equality in Law, which has 200 members, sent copies of the Geneva appeal to all members of the French parliament. Only 10 of the National Assembly's 577 deputies bothered to reply. Seven wrote back saying they agreed with the judges' appeal.

The judges' call also seems to have received a favourable reception in other European countries. Italy's Association of Magistrates voted a resolution in support of the call. Several magistrates' organisations in Switzerland followed their example, and initiatives are afoot in Belgium and Spain to organise petitions.

"Justice is the third pillar of the Maastricht Treaty, but international judicial co-operation is extremely difficult," says Judge Renaud Van Ruymbeke, one of those behind the Geneva initiative.




"For example, in Luxembourg which is a member of the EU, it takes such a long time to obtain [legal dossiers], and procedures for filing appeals are so numerous that two to three years are often necessary to get information about a bank account. If we really want to come to grips with big-time financial crime, it will be necessary to set up a more rapid and direct system."

The Geneva appeal called for the exchange of international letters rogatory [seeking judicial information] between judges and their colleagues in other countries to be allowed "without interference from the executive authority and without going through diplomatic channels". Such requests are currently forwarded through public prosecutors to the ministries of justice and foreign affairs.

"The individual judge should be able to contact a European counterpart directly," said Van Ruymbeke. "A magistrate in Paris should be able to ask for co-operation from a judge in Germany just as he can today from a judge in Besançon . . . the free movement of judicial information should be made possible."

Last October, France's justice minister, Jacques Toubon, signed an agreement appended to the 1958 European Convention on Judicial Co-operation. International letters rogatory will no longer be forwarded through ministries, but will go on being transmitted by public prosecutors' departments.

"The agreement has still not come into force, which prevents us from appraising its effectiveness," cautioned Geneva public prosecutor Bernard Bertossa. "It's a small step forward, but we mustn't have any illusions. Only direct communication between judges, without going through the public prosecutor's department, will permit speedy and efficient co-operation."

(February 6)

# Justice finally catches up with maverick Bernard Tapie

Hervé Gattegno in Paris

BERNARD TAPIE, the high-profile football promoter, businessman and former minister who has spent years fighting lawsuits and trying to stay out of prison, this week began serving a six-month term for tax fraud at the Santé prison in Paris. Other charges are still pending.

The spectre of jail had been haunting him since last November, when an attempt to have him arrested was rejected by the office of the National Assembly. Penal sanctions have from the outset punctuated the life of this businessman whose appetite for honours and personal success is as ravenous as it is devoid of scruples.

In 1981, he was given a suspended prison sentence of one year (since subject to an amnesty) after the collapse of an association he set up to help people with a heart condition. This was followed by three tax reappraisals, fines imposed by Customs, and reprimands from the watchdog committee of the Paris Bourse.

Ten years later, Tapie's relations with the judiciary were still governed by a cynical profession of faith that could be summed up as "It can't hurt if nobody knows". Commercial courts were open to accepting all sorts of arrangements, and this worked in his favour. Politics was to give him "enough clout" to clear even legal hurdles.

In November 1990, when police called at the offices of his football club, Olympique Marseille, Tapie — by now a member of parliament — was in Japan on business. He telephoned the Marseilles public prosecutor and the regional police director and told them to call off the investigations.

On his return, he asked Jean-Paul Huchon, personal secretary to the then prime minister, Michel Rocard, to halt the inquiry. "Monsieur Tapie has a vertical conception of relations between the government and justice," noted Huchon wryly.

It is an understatement to say that developments hardly proved him wrong. It took a year and a half for a judge to be named to look into the management of the football club, even though Tapie's two closest associates, Jean-Pierre Bernès and Alain Laroche, had revealed most of the fraudulent practices during police questioning.

In that same year, 1992, Tapie — then minister of urban affairs in Pierre Bérégovoy's government — owed his survival in a judicial confrontation with a former business partner, Georges Tranchant, a National Assembly member, to a miraculous financial deal that led to the court dismissing the charges against him. "Business morality has taken a bashing," noted investigating Judge Edith Boizette, ruling in favour of Tapie after Tranchant withdrew his complaint.

The guiding principle of this controversial standard-bearer of Mitterrandism has always been contempt for justice and judges, whom he regards as civil servants dispensing law without elective legitimacy. Once, in a burst of anger, he compared them to the Gestapo.

Despite being an ex-minister convicted of tax fraud, an ex-football club president found guilty of corruption, and an ex-company director put into bankruptcy, Tapie has always attempted to give the impression of a man who was master of his own destiny.

Tapie spelled out his own rules of the game in his autobiography: "The reward is not money: it's the pleasure, the game, the freedom, the ability to create. In our society, losing no longer means dying of hunger. In a way it's not having the right to move around; it's being under house arrest."

Judged by this yardstick, Tapie is probably much closer to defeat than he has ever been.

(February 5)

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# Madagascar's dictator back as democrat

**Jean-Pierre Langellier**
**In Tananarive**

DIDIER RATSIRAKA made a spectacular comeback when he was re-elected president of Madagascar on January 31. He also got his own back on Albert Zafy, the man who had easily beaten him in the 1993 presidential elections following 18 years of Ratsiraka's rule. The result this time was close, however: in the second round of polling only 45,000 votes out of more than 3 million separated the two men.

Ratsiraka's victory represents a true resurrection for the architect of Madagascar's "second independence" in 1975. His authoritarian and corrupt brand of socialism was to bankrupt the nation by the mid-eighties. He then switched — but too late — to a combination of economic liberalism and political openness.

During eight months of strikes and demonstrations, which culminated in the massacre of several dozen people in front of the presidential palace in August 1991, Madagascans repeatedly called for Ratsiraka to go. Following a rout in the 1993 election, he went into exile in France.

"King Didier" owes his comeback to the blunders of "the Professor". Zafy, a respected physician but a political amateur, was not cut out for high office. His three years in power were synonymous with incompetence, and the corruption he had promised to stamp out thrived more than ever. He was impeached last July.



**Callback . . . Ratsiraka gets news during the first round of presidential elections in Tananarive last November** PHOTO: ADIL BRADLOW

Ratsiraka's return to power comes at an auspicious moment. The International Monetary Fund has offered Madagascar a structural adjustment facility, and the signs are that repayments of its foreign debt, totalling about $5 billion, will be rescheduled. But the new president, whose campaign platform contained a grandiose, if rather woolly, plan for a "humanist and ecological republic", faces several problems. Among these is the fact that his eyesight is poor, and that only one in four Madagascans voted for him.

Above all, Ratsiraka will have to respect the institutions of Madagascar's third republic, which provide for the prime minister to play a decisive role in government. Ratsiraka wants to change the constitution through a referendum. Whether he will succeed is another matter: the Madagascans will certainly not wish to be divested of the advantages of democracy, which, after several weeks of suspense following a neck-and-neck election, has passed its first real test with flying colours.

**(February 2-3)**

# Turkish schoolchildren tell of brutality

**Nicole Pope in Istanbul**

OVER the past year a group of 16 high-school pupils from the western Turkish town of Manisa have been through a Kafkaesque nightmare. Their ordeal culminated on January 10, with 10 of them being sentenced to heavy jail terms by a state security court.

Fulya Apaydin was only 17 when police picked her up at her home on December 26, 1995, to ask her a few questions. She spent most of the next 11 days blindfolded and forced to listen to the screams of her school friends — including her younger sister, Munire, who had been arrested at school that same day — in the room next to her cell.

She covers her ears with her hands as she remembers those sounds, which were "not human", and lowers her voice when describing how it took months before she could bring herself to tell her family and lawyer about the sexual harassment she suffered.

Unlike Fulya, who was released after her first round of questioning and later acquitted, Ozgür Zeybek, now 17, has already spent four and a half months in prison after being subjected to electric shocks. If his appeal is rejected, he will have to serve his full 30-month sentence. The 10 teenagers sentenced were given a total of 76 years in jail, with five of them getting 12¼ years each. The only evidence against them consisted of confessions they signed after allegedly being subjected to torture and psychological pressure.

Their lawyer, Pelin Erda, explains that everyone's political leanings are common knowledge in Manisa. She describes Fulya, Ozgür and the rest as being "progressive, democratic and open" in an idealistic way. Several belong to the Social Democratic Party's youth wing. Others are musicians who sing political songs.

Recently Manisa got a new security chief. He had been transferred from Bingöl, in southeastern Anatolia, where security forces often clash with rebels belonging to the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK).

Even in quiet Manisa, the new security chief saw enemies of the state everywhere and was determined to rid the town of them. "People like him regard anyone with leftwing or pacifist ideas as an anarchist," says the Social-Democratic member of parliament, Sabri Ergül.

That is how the teenagers, the youngest of whom was only 14, came to be blamed for a few minor incidents that had taken place in Manisa over the previous months. Police say a hairdresser's salon was burnt down after a Molotov cocktail was thrown at it. The fact that the fire service's own investigation and evidence given by the owner suggested the fire was accidental was apparently not taken into account.

And then there were the slogans, such as "Down with fascism", and "No to fee-paying schools", which allegedly had been daubed on a train and on a factory wall.

Allegations of maltreatment were corroborated by the evidence of Ergül and Erda, who visited the security headquarters to see Erda's brother after his arrest. After a long wait in the anti-terrorist section, she was shattered to see her brother staggering along between two policemen at the end of a long corridor.

Ergül faced an even more chilling spectacle when, after hearing screams, which were immediately drowned by martial music, he opened a door. "I saw two girls and two boys, all stark naked. The girls were young and had long hair. One was lying on the ground, the other standing. There were three or four plainclothes policemen round the girl on the ground, and two or three round the standing one," he told the public prosecutor in court.

The medical reports on the accused, which were drawn up in unsatisfactory circumstances, only mention a bruise or two. But the evidence given by Ergül, Erda and some of the arrested youngsters' parents leaves little doubt that the teenagers were badly treated.

Proceedings were eventually brought against the 10 Manisa policemen, though they were not suspended while awaiting the court's ruling. What is surprising, to say the least, is that the security court, a special semi-military body, should have shown such alacrity in sentencing the Manisa youngsters before the results of the policemen's trial were known.

**(February 1)**

# Ukraine banks on its natural assets

**Natalie Nougayrède**
in Dnepropetrovsk finds Russian gas powering more than the economy

THE PEOPLE of Dnepropetrovsk, in eastern Ukraine, have not renounced their Soviet past or historical links with neighbouring Russia. The local élite is much the same as it was a few years ago — mostly Russian-speaking, often Russian-educated, and fiercely defensive of its own interests, which are generally seen as involving "close collaboration" with "our most reliable partner", Russia.

But if Dnepropetrovsk is where Leonid Brezhnev was born, it is also the home town of the Ukrainian president, Leonid Kuchma. Under his rule, slogans such as "friendship between peoples" have been replaced by talk of "trading relations according to international practice". The luxury boutiques, flashy restaurants and well-protected banks that line Karl Marx Avenue may be unique in Ukraine and only affordable to the privileged classes, but they reflect an undoubted business dynamism.

"Dnepropetrovsk is a model for the whole of Ukraine," says Gennady Gniedash, who runs a bureau for "company and market infrastructure development". The city is awash with money. But if you ask where it all comes from, most people remain tight-lipped. Gniedash says more than 50 per cent of the economy is underground and falls outside the scope of the tax authorities.

The statistics ministry says that eastern Ukraine reaps the benefit of the metallurgical and chemical exports that account for 60 per cent of the country's foreign currency earnings. Another less official explanation points to the penetration of the Ukrainian economy by large Russian corporations such as Gazprom, the Russian "state within a state".

Gazprom, which controls one-third of the world's gas reserves, is one of the main instruments used by Russia in its "near abroad" policy. Its main partner in Ukraine is the Dnepropetrovsk-based Unified Energy Systems (UES). Yulia Timoshenko, aged 36, who heads the company, is a "close collaborator" — and rumoured stooge — of the prime minister, Pavel Lazarenko. A former governor of Dnepropetrovsk, Lazarenko has been tipped by the local press to become the country's next president. His regular unofficial visits to Moscow are the subject of much speculation, and he is reported to be the richest man in Ukraine.

UES, a monopolistic structure set up by Lazarenko in December 1996, is a consortium of importers of Russian gas that controls the distribution in one-third of Ukraine. Its profits, its Moscow connections and details of its relationship with Gazprom are described as a trade secrets.

Ukraine depends almost entirely on Russia for its energy. But it also benefits from the revenues, backhanders and other "deals" involved in the transit of 130 billion cubic metres of Russian gas through Ukrainian territory on its way to central and western Europe.

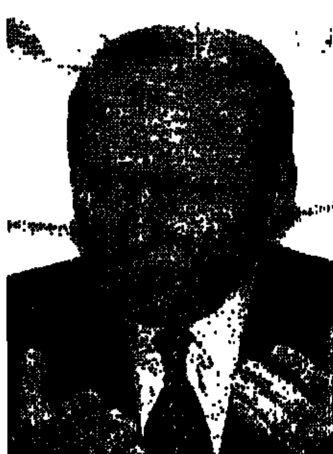
In Dnepropetrovsk almost nothing gets done without "gas money". UES has enabled Ukraine's third-largest city to build itself a new international airport, with regular flights to Vienna and Frankfurt and planned connections with the Arab emirates.

UES likes to see itself as a caring employer — this diverts attention from the personal fortunes some executives have reportedly stashed away in foreign banks. It has helped fund the building of a metro, the purchase of trams, a hospital and a library.

The election of UES's managing director to parliament in December was a formality. "During the run-up to the byelection in Kirovabad district, where companies had pay arrears going back several months, Timoshenko got everyone's salary paid," says a local journalist. "It was only logical she should pick up 90 per cent of the vote."

The "barons" of eastern Ukraine are gaining political clout. According to a member of parliament: "One minister in two belongs to the clan." But the clan is also riven by internal divisions, and rumours that Lazarenko may be ousted by President Kuchma suggest that his hold on the premiership is not as strong as it might seem.

But few apart from the nationalists, who are losing ground, worry much about the way Ukrainian and Russian business circles interconnect. "I believe Ukraine's independence process is irreversible," says a Dnepropetrovsk businessman. In his view, the verbal jousting between Kiev and Moscow over the Crimean port of Sebastopol (the Russian military base in southern Ukraine) is simply a case of people upping the ante in a situation produced by the battle to succeed Boris Yeltsin. "The real issue lies elsewhere: Russia has an economic interest in the stability of the Ukraine; as a market for its products and as a transit zone for its gas."



**Kuchma . . . gone commercial**

However, one statistic puzzles local government officials: the biggest investor in the region — and the one that accounts for 24 per cent of all foreign capital invested — is Cyprus, a major outlet for laundered money from Russia.

**(January 30)**



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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# Bulgaria Slides Into Economic Collapse

**Lee Hockstader in Sofia**

TAKE a stroll through downtown Sofia, and pick through the wreckage of Europe's worst-run economy.

Stop by the little state-run bakery on Slivnitsa Boulevard, where 40 people are jostling for bread at 9:45 in the morning. They're too late; the last loaves sold out 5 minutes ago. There's been a flour shortage since government officials allowed some of their buddies to buy up much of Bulgaria's bumper grain crop for a pittance last year and sell it at a huge profit abroad.

Cross the street to Tsetska Dragumirova's meat and cheese shop. No line here — the shelves have been empty for a week. And don't hold your breath for deliveries, the proprietor says. With the government penniless and its currency collapsing, prices are changing by the hour, and suppliers are too jumpy to sell at any price.

Around the corner at St. Paraskieva Church, more than 100 elderly people bundled up against the cold have shuffled inside by 11:30am for free sandwiches and a bowl of soup. Inflation, fueled by fat state subsidies for influential industrialists and bankers, has decimated retirees' buying power.

"I've never been hungry before," said Violeta Ivanova, 79, a retired seamstress whose monthly pension is now worth about $2. Like many Bulgarians, she lived comfortably, if not in luxury, before the economy began its nose dive a year ago. "But it's getting harder and harder. There's almost nothing I can afford."

Corruption, mismanagement and insider deals have plagued virtually every formerly socialist country in Eastern Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. But as an object lesson in how not to manage the economic transition from socialism, Bulgaria, a country of 8.4 million people, is in a league of its own, according to economists and foreign observers who have studied the country's financial free-fall.

Unlike the region's more authoritarian outposts, such as Yugoslavia and Albania, Bulgaria has had seven reasonably free and fair elections in seven years. Its media, including television, have evolved in a more or less unfettered direction. The country was the first in the region to adopt a new constitution, and not a drop of blood was spilled in the course of its emergence from behind the Iron Curtain.

But Bulgaria's shuffle toward democracy has not been matched by a comparable move toward a free-market economy. Its transition was choreographed by Communist elites who changed their name, calling themselves socialists, but who clung to power and to old ideas.

The government, run or controlled by former Communists for five of the last seven years, has refused to sell off huge, money-losing state enterprises or to turn the country's fertile agricultural land over to private farmers.

"The socialists feared capitalism, because it means the creation of autonomous centers of power," said Ivan Krastev, a political analyst at the Center for Liberal Strategies, a Sofia think tank.

Instead, the government has pumped out credits to sustain state enterprises, or has had state-controlled banks extend loans that no one ever expected to be repaid. It has tolerated, encouraged and even participated in schemes to bleed factories of their assets, banks of their deposits and citizens of their savings, economists say. With no notion of who owns what agricultural land, many of the best fields lie fallow, and the countryside is dotted with destitute collective farms.

The resulting economic crisis exploded into popular outrage last month, when previously quiescent Bulgarians poured into the streets to demand that the governing Socialist Party, as the Communists are now known, leave power now rather than when their four-year term expires at the end of 1998.



**An opposition supporter shouts anti-Communist slogans during a rally in Sofia last week** PHOTOGRAPH: VADIM GHIRDA

After a month of mostly peaceful daily protests that paralyzed Sofia and brought much of the country's business to a halt, the Socialists, who lack the kind of fiercely loyal police and media that have sustained President Slobodan Milosevic in neighboring Serbia, cried uncle last week. They agreed to hand over power to a caretaker government until new elections in mid-April, which they are unlikely to win.

"We'd better celebrate now, because we have very hard days ahead," said Ivan Kostov, leader of the opposition United Democratic Forces. No one here would disagree. Almost nothing in the economy is on firm footing right now.

Restaurants post their prices on wipe-clean boards to keep abreast of wild swings in the value of the currency. Government controls have kept the price of a liter of gasoline cheaper than in Saudi Arabia, but the policy has bankrupted the oil refinery and caused severe gas shortages and long lines at the pump.

Bulgarians and foreign observers single out the Socialist government of Prime Minister Zhan Videnov, which has held power since December 1994, as largely to blame for the morass. "No political force is above suspicion, but under Videnov the corruption was carried to a new and particularly ugly art form," a Western diplomat in Sofia said.

Ordinary households at the bottom of the economic food chain have been left to pay the bill. By some estimates, nearly half the children in Bulgaria are undernourished.

# Rebels Gain Ground in Eastern Zaire

**Stephen Buckley in Goma**

ZAIRIAN rebel forces captured or moved toward several key cities and towns in eastern Zaire over the past week in what may be a decisive turn in their guerrilla war against President Mobutu Sese Seko's government in Kinshasa.

The rebels' moves toward Kisangani, Zaire's fourth largest city, and their taking of Kalemie, in the strategic province of Shaba, have alarmed the Zairian government, which announced a counter-offensive against the rebels a month ago but has little to show for it.

The rebel advances came in the fourth month of a conflict that many fear could explode into a regional war or lead to further dissolution of this long-troubled nation, the second largest in sub-Saharan Africa.

The insurgent force, which started its campaign in late October, says it controls at least 600 miles of territory along Zaire's eastern border with Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. Although government officials publicly have disputed rebel claims in recent days, downplaying or denying reports of rebel advances in eastern Zaire, privately Zairian government forces "are very worried," said one diplomat in the region. "They are describing the situation as very grave," added the diplomat, who asked not to be identified.

Zaire began its counter-offensive, with help from several hundred mercenaries, after the rebel force, known as the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, swept through several key towns and cities in eastern Zaire in eight weeks. During that period, the rebel troops, believed to number several thousand, shut several camps of Rwandan refugees between late October and mid-November, sending at least 600,000 scrambling home.

The rebels, whose leader Laurent Kabila says his goal is to overthrow Mobutu, called for negotiations, but the government rejected the overtures. Instead, the Zairian army has tried to retake lost territory and has largely failed. Government troops, who make the equivalent of 50 cents per month, frequently flee as rebels approach, as was apparently the case twice last week when the rebels took the towns of Shabunda and Kalemie.

"You can't really call this a war," the diplomat said. "A war is when two sides are engaging each other. Right now the government soldiers simply are not fighting."

If that continues, government worries about the imminent fall of Kisangani and the province of Shaba may be well founded. Kisangani, in north-central Zaire, is the base of the counter-offensive. It has one of the few airports in eastern Zaire and is located along the strategically important Zaire River.

Diplomats and aid workers say they believe the rebels may take Kisangani within days. Indeed, rebel movements prompted international relief workers to evacuate the city on Friday last week, fearing impending violence.

But at least as important is the mineral-rich province of Shaba, home to Kabila. Shaba, in southeast Zaire, is a semi-autonomous region, after two rebellions during the 1970s.

If the rebels take Lubumbashi, they will control about one-third of Zaire. The fall of Lubumbashi would be the regime's "worst nightmare," one political analyst said.

Some analysts said the fall of Shaba could compel the government to negotiate with the rebels. But some diplomats said they fear that if Shaba falls, the province will cement its split from Zaire, heightening the sense of chaos that pervades the country generally, and eastern Zaire in particular.

The rebels' apparent successes reportedly have prompted the Zairian government to call upon African nations to aid them by sending troops. Diplomats say the regime has sought help from Egypt, Togo and Morocco. Egypt and Togo have denied that Zaire made such a request. Mobutu, who returned to Zaire on Friday last week after medical tests in France, stopped in Morocco before coming home but denies that he asked for troops.

Meanwhile, the conflict has hurt aid workers' efforts to help between 200,000 and 300,000 Rwandan refugees remaining in eastern Zaire. Relief agencies reported last week that tens of thousands of refugees scattered from their camps as rebel troops approached.

# Africa Force Plan Revised

**Thomas W. Lippman**

**NEARLY six months after proposing with great fanfare to create an all-African military force to intervene in that continent's trouble spots, a chastened Clinton administration has revised the plan to meet African demands for more decision-making power and overcome French resistance.**

**Since President Clinton approved the original plan several crises have erupted in Africa — in Zaire, in Sudan and in the Central African Republic — but any U.S.-sponsored force is still many months away from deployment, according to administration officials and European and African diplomats.**

**The proposed Africa Crisis Response Force, or ACRF, "is alive and moving, very much so," one senior official said, but "our original timetable was overly aggressive."**

**That timetable called for up to 10,000 African troops to be designated, trained, equipped and prepared for deployment well before the end of this year. So far, however, only two countries have designated military units for potential participation and training has not yet begun, officials said.**

**Mali and Ethiopia declared their willingness to participate when then-Secretary of State Warren Christopher visited Africa in October. According to administration officials and foreign diplomats, many other African countries have endorsed the concept in principle, and several European allies have agreed to support it.**

**But the original U.S. plan, hastily devised in anticipation of an explosion of violence in Burundi that has so far not occurred, failed to take into account African sensitivities about decisions made by outsiders, several sources said.**

**Fledgling regional groups within Africa, such as the 12-member Southern Africa Development Committee, wanted an official voice in deciding when and where an intervention force might be needed, who should be in it and what its assignment should be, and the United States is prepared to accommodate them, several sources said.**

**Such an arrangement would move the U.S. vision of the force closer to that of France, which has been reluctant to support what it sees as an effort to muscle in on what has traditionally been a French zone of influence.**

**"We ourselves would like to have further consultations with our members before we announce our ideas about it," said Ahmed Haggag, deputy secretary general of the Organization of African Unity. "Sub-groups such as the SADC have their own blueprints about conflict resolution."**

# Simpson Ordered To Pay $33.5 Million

**William Booth and William Claiborne in Santa Monica**

IN A STUNNING financial punishment that exceeded even the plaintiffs' expectations, the civil trial jury that last week blamed O.J. Simpson for the murders of his ex-wife and her friend on Monday ordered him to pay the victims' families $25 million in punitive damages.

That award, bringing the combined total of compensatory and punitive damages to $33.5 million, could leave the fallen football star, sportscaster and television pitchman with a lifetime of debt unless it is reduced or thrown out on appeal.

The six-man, six-woman, mostly white jury deliberated for just over five hours before reaching its split-vote damages verdicts against Simpson, who was acquitted in 1995 of the 1994 deaths of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman.

Without identifying themselves by name, eight jurors and alternates told a news conference that the evidence against Simpson had ranged from "above a preponderance" — the civil trial standard — to "beyond a reasonable doubt." A white woman juror, said: "It was 100 percent for me. I really believed Mr. Simpson was guilty. We went through all the evidence, and it had nothing to do with Mr. Simpson's skin."

The jury voted 10 to 2 to award Goldman's family $12.5 million, far more than legal experts had expected because of the $8.5 million in compensatory damages already awarded to the family last week, when Simpson was unanimously held liable for the deaths. The jury also allotted $12.5 million to Nicole Simpson's estate, whose beneficiaries include her two children now living in O.J. Simpson's custody.

The jury voted 11 to 1 on whether to award punitive damages to each of the families and 10 to 2 on the amounts. The lone holdout on awarding damages was a Jamaican-born man who also has Asian ancestry. He and a white woman in her twenties voted against the amount of the awards.

Almost all the jurors who spoke to reporters, with the exception of one black woman who served as an alternate, said they did not find Simpson to be a credible witness when he took the stand in his own defense. One white male juror said, "I had trouble believing what he was telling me. It seemed like he was just waiting to get the questions done" before denying the allegations against him.

The jurors said they had considered the plaintiffs' allegations that police had planted evidence against Simpson and had uniformly rejected them. Several of the panelists said they attached considerable importance to DNA blood evidence and the bloody glove found by police behind Simpson's estate the night of the murders, but that their conclusion that Simpson committed the murders was based on the accumulation of circumstantial evidence.

Daniel Petrocelli, the lead plaintiffs' lawyer, said: "It was critical to expose that he wasn't telling the truth ... We all felt it was absolutely essential to call O.J. Simpson a killer — to treat him like a killer if we wanted the jury to conclude that he was." Petrocelli said his strategy was to try "a tight case" and put on as many police witnesses as possible, thereby forcing Simpson to contradict them all.

Simpson was not in the courtroom when the verdicts were read. However, Simpson's friend and spokesman, attorney Leo Terrell, angrily told reporters: "This verdict is illegal. This verdict was wrong. You can't award more money under punitive damages than the man has." Terrell said the law is clear in its intent to punish and not destroy a civil defendant.

The punitive damages is one of the highest ever returned against an individual. A Bronx jury last year ordered $25 million in punitive damages and $18 million in compensatory damages against Bernhard Goetz, who shot four black youths in a subway car.



O.J. Simpson leaves the Santa Monica courthouse after being found liable on all counts in his civil trial last week PHOTO: STEVE GRAYSON

Simpson can appeal — and is almost certain to do so — to stay the award, since the amount is far higher even than what the plaintiffs claimed Simpson is worth. But if Simpson does appeal, he will have to post a bond of one and a half times the total judgments. Unless he files such a bond, the plaintiffs can almost immediately seek to attach Simpson's assets. Legal experts said the post-trial motions and appeals could take years to resolve.

Filing for bankruptcy is another option for Simpson, but it would not allow him to avoid his debts. Such a filing could, however, allow Simpson to put the plaintiffs in line behind his creditors, including his attorney, who placed a lien on the defendant's mansion in fashionable Brentwood to secure his payment.

Judge Hiroshi Fujisaki ordered the damage awards stayed for 10 days while post-trial motions are filed. In instructing the jury on the punitive damages, Fujisaki had said three principal elements should be considered: reprehensibility in Simpson's conduct, the deterrent effect of any judgment and the need for a reasonable relationship between the award and the injuries suffered by the victims.

# Hooked on Information Highway

EDITORIAL

**IN THE chaotic aftermath of America Online's attempt to offer 8 million subscribers unlimited time online for a flat fee, the real novelty that is worth noting is not the lawsuits or the busy signals but the raw desperation evinced by AOL subscribers who couldn't get into the system.**

**The prevailing urgency was reflected in the prompt legal action brought by no fewer than 36 state attorney generals with whom the online service provider ended up negotiating a settlement. It also showed in the alacrity with which AOL — for the third time in a year — went about trying to mollify its infuriated customers with promises of refunds.**

**The traffic jam and ensuing panic are evidence that at least part of the visionaries' notion of a completely "wired" world has come to pass. Alas, it's not the part of the vision where everyone has instant access to everyone else via cyberspace — that's yet to come — but rather the part where those who have that access are completely dependent on it and cannot imagine life without the capability to access their e-mail.**

**AOL, of course, has every reason in the world to nurture that feeling of dependence rather than ease it — otherwise there's no future for the product. But in the awkward phase that has come to be tagged as "early adoption" of a technology — in which that technology is changing patterns of work and communication, but without yet being able to offer the reliability that would make such a changeover safe — it and other service providers have a tricky balance to strike.**

**It's nearly impossible to gauge how many of the AOL customers who were inconvenienced in last month's jam-ups are truly dependent on the new technology for their practical livelihood and how many are merely dependent on it psychologically for social interactions (as in the familiar case of college students on vacation, who have been observed suffering massive withdrawal when they leave their wired dorm rooms for the primitive facilities of home).**

**What is clear, though, is that even if the online population is still small, made up of the so-called "early adopters" — people who like to plunge into use of a new tool before the bugs relating to it are ironed out — the phase of Internet exploration is over during which those colonizers had cheerfully low expectations.**

**It's no coincidence that the once-promised and presumed freedoms of the medium are becoming more difficult to safeguard at the same time. A cyberspace population that can muster legal action from 36 states is not the anarchic, Wild-West-style one that started out into the medium's wide open spaces.**



# Justice on TV in Black and White

OPINION
**William Raspberry**

SOME random thoughts in the wake of OJ II: As far as I'm concerned, the debate over TV cameras in the courtroom is settled — for the affirmative.

I know there are those who thought the presence of TV cameras pushed the lawyers and the judge in the criminal trial to ridiculous extremes of nitpicking and redundancy. Maybe. But it also prompted them to do their very best — even if their very best sometimes wasn't good enough. But that's not the only reason for my conclusion that television ought to be allowed in the courtrooms most of the time. The big reason is the educational value of seeing it yourself.

It was impossible for a nonlawyer to watch OJ I without learning something about the law — about motions, admissibility, leading questions, relevance. We learned a good deal about the strengths of our legal system (for instance, the safeguards built in to protect the accused) as well as its weaknesses (including the fact that you have to have money to avail yourself of all those safeguards).

Are we really as racially riven a society as reaction to the two Simpson trials suggests? Listen well, because I may be the only one who believes it: I don't think so.

I know that from the very first linking of Simpson to the murders of his ex-wife Nicole and her friend Ron Goldman, black and white America went bipolar. And they stayed that way right to the end, with about two-thirds of whites certain Simpson was guilty and two-thirds of blacks doubting it.

Naturally whites thought Simpson's acquittal was a miscarriage of justice and blacks thought the civil trial — a private suit for money damages — the "system's" attempt to have a second bite at the apple.

But what we saw may have been racial only in the sense that blacks, based on bitter experience, are less likely than whites to assume the disinterested veracity of white police officers. If you thought (as blacks tended to) that some of the evidence against Simpson was probably planted, then you don't have a hard time finding reasonable doubt. That doesn't necessarily make us a divided society. But it does make you nervous about the fact that the civil jury that found unanimously against Simpson didn't have any — well, hardly any — black people on it. Unlike the mostly black criminal jury that voted unanimously to acquit, this one had nine whites, one Hispanic, one Asian American and a Jamaican immigrant who described himself as black and Asian.

But who's counting? Well, of course we *all* are. And doesn't that refute my notion that we are not as racially riven as some of us think? I don't think so. It's simply an acknowledgement that the near-total absence of blacks on a jury considering a case with significant racial implications is a problem.

The obvious "solution" is to make sure that juries are, to the extent practicable and in all racially conflicted cases, representative of the larger community. The danger is that formally requiring such representation could lead individual jurors to suppose that they are proxies for their geographic or racial or ethnic groups, not seekers of truth. Woe betide us if we ever start thinking it legitimate to vote our group and not our consciences.

As it now stands, the unavoidable shorthand is that a black jury acquitted Simpson and a white jury convicted him, on pretty much the same evidence.

It wasn't just the same old evidence. There were, of course, the infamous Bruno Magli shoes. But more importantly, there was Simpson himself. His insistence that he never struck his ex-wife, his explanation that the bruises on her face (which she apparently had photographed as evidence of his battering) resulted from her picking at pimples, or some such. Virtually every black person I know said it was a mistake for Simpson to deny everything, that doing so destroyed his credibility.

I can't prove it; it probably won't show up in the polls for a while, and it may not even be so. But my guess is that black America is not nearly as convinced as it was before of Simpson's innocence. The reports of the civil proceedings have had their effect — at least on those who followed the news accounts. Maybe we also know a bit more than we did about such things as burdens of proof and reversible error.

I just think we'd have learned a lot more — and perhaps even had a bit more faith in the integrity of our judicial system — if we could have seen it for ourselves. On TV.



# Illegal Resident Population Increasing, INS Says

**William Branigin**

THE NUMBER of illegal immigrants residing permanently in the United States has grown to about 5 million and is rising by 275,000 a year, the Immigration and Naturalization Service said last week.

In what federal officials called their most accurate calculation ever of illegal immigration, the INS estimated that this population has increased by 28 percent in the past four years alone. According to the new analysis, illegal immigrants now account for nearly 2 percent of the total U.S. population.

The new figure raised questions about the strategy of Congress and the Clinton administration to throw the great bulk of resources at the southwestern border with Mexico in efforts to combat illegal immigration.

According to the INS study, 41 percent of the illegal resident population, or 2.1 million people, originally entered the country legally at airports and other entry points but then overstayed their visas. Of the net increase in the illegal population of 275,000 a year, about 125,000 a year are visa overstayers, the INS said.

Yet, while dramatically beefing up the U.S. Border Patrol, Congress did not appropriate funds for a relatively modest addition of 300 investigators to ferret out visa overstayers inside the country.

"Congress and the administration ... remembered the policemen and forgot the detectives," complained INS special agent Robert A. McGraw in a recent article in the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association journal.

According to advocates of lower immigration levels, the new estimate of illegal immigrants also represents a failure of the 1986 immigration reform act in which Congress granted amnesty to nearly 3 million illegal aliens. The act was intended to clamp off future illegal immigration, but it failed to deal effectively with unauthorized employment and to remove the "job magnet" that draws people to this country, these advocates complain. "The illegal population has now reached the level that it was before the 1986 amnesty," said Mark Krikorian, director of the Center for Immigration Studies.

In announcing the new estimate, Robert Bach, the INS executive associate commissioner for policy and planning, described the illegal immigrant population as a problem largely "inherited" from previous administrations. He said that over the past two decades, "a lack of resources and attention allowed illegal immigration to flourish," but that the administration now has an effective "multiyear strategy" to cope with it.

The illegal immigrant population is heavily concentrated in certain regions of the country. California tops the list with 40 percent of the total. Texas accounts for 14.1 percent and New York has 10.8 percent, the INS reported.

A majority of the illegal immigrant population, 2.7 million or 54 percent, came from Mexico, the INS said. The countries with the next highest shares were El Salvador, Guatemala, Canada and Haiti.

# Labor Surge Sets Jobs Record

**John M. Berry**

THE CONTINUED demand for workers has been so strong across the United States that a record share of the population over age 15 — nearly two-thirds — had a job last month, the Labor Department reported last week.

The search by employers for both skilled and unskilled workers has drawn so many people into the job market that over the past year the size of the labor force has increased twice as fast as the population itself. Last month, for instance, so many people began looking for jobs that the unemployment rate edged up to 5.4 percent.

This unanticipated surge in workers provided enough additional labor last year that the economy was able to grow much more rapidly than more forecasters had expected without causing the unemployment rate to plunge sharply. Had that happened, the Federal Reserve likely would have raised interest rates to cool off the economy to keep inflation under control.

Beyond this already rapid growth in the labor force, the department revised its estimate of the work force upward by another nearly half a million workers last month based on new population data from the Census Bureau regarding the number and age of recent immigrants to the United States. Most of the added workers were of Hispanic origin.

With that addition, the civilian labor force reached 135.9 million, 128.6 million of whom had full- or part-time jobs while 7.3 million people were looking for work but had not found it. That meant that 63.6 percent of the nation's population over age 15, not including those in institutions such as hospitals or prisons, held jobs.

Meanwhile, the Labor report also said that the number of payroll jobs continued to rise strongly last month. Employers added 271,000 jobs, after seasonal adjustment, bringing the increase since January 1996 to almost 3 million.

A good number of the jobs gained — 82,000 — were with temporary help agencies. Other areas of growth included business services, such as computer and data processing, along with health services. Manufacturing payrolls, which declined sharply in the first part of last year, rose by 18,000, the sixth consecutive monthly gain.

Both department officials and private analysts said it was more difficult than usual to interpret what the January payroll gain may indicate about the course of the economy because it was noticeably affected both by severe winter weather around the country last month, and by both severe weather and the federal government shutdown in January a year ago.

Last year's shutdown and bad weather affected the number through the seasonal adjustment process. So many people lost jobs in January 1996 that it was anticipated that would happen again this year, based on the formula used. That boosted the reported payroll increase by approximately 75,000, some analysts estimated.

On the other hand, last month's bad weather tended to depress hiring, particularly in construction trades, Labor officials said. Even more significantly, the weather was blamed for most of a large drop in the length of the average workweek to 34.1 hours from 34.8 hours. That decline meant that even with more workers on the jobs, the total number of hours worked fell 1.7 percent — which means that as yet unreported statistics such as industrial production and personal incomes probably also fell last month.

Analysts said that with these distortions, it could take another two months' worth of data before forecasters get a solid handle on the course of the economy for the first part of this year.

"We believe that the 'true' underlying rate of job growth is indeed below the 200,000 per month range," said Bruce Steinberg, macroeconomics manager at Merrill Lynch & Co. in New York. If the labor force should grow 2 percent again this year as it did in 1996, "payrolls could actually grow by 250,000 per month with a steady unemployment rate," he said.

Steinberg and a number of other analysts said that the report "raised the odds that the Fed will hold policy steady at the March 25 [policymaking] meeting and beyond."



# Clinton and Yeltsin to Meet in Helsinki

**John F. Harris and Michael Dobbs**

PRESIDENT Clinton will meet with Russian President Boris Yeltsin next month in Helsinki for a summit designed to allay Moscow's fears about the expansion of NATO, the administration said last week in an announcement that had been delayed for weeks because of concerns about the Russian leader's frail health.

The rotating schedule of meetings between Clinton and Yeltsin calls for their next session to be in Washington, but the location for the two-day summit, beginning on March 20, was moved to the Finnish capital to make the travel less taxing for Yeltsin, who is recovering from heart surgery.

Clinton, speaking with reporters before an Oval Office meeting with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, said he hopes when he meets with Yeltsin to "make it clear that no one has any intention of providing any increased threat to the security of Russia."

The 16-member North Atlantic Treaty Organization, an alliance formed to thwart feared aggression in Europe by the Soviet Union after World War II, will meet in Madrid in July to invite three Warsaw Pact nations to join NATO. The nations, while officially undecided, are Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, U.S. officials said.

The planned expansion is provoking a strongly negative response in Russia, where leaders warn that many people will interpret it as a provocative gesture that could make Russian cooperation in arms control and other areas more difficult. The administration has said it is trying to ease those fears by having NATO negotiate a new security charter with Russia.

This was among the principal issues, administration officials said, dominating three days of talks in Washington last week between Vice President Al Gore and Chernomyrdin. The two men meet semiannually on trade, arms control and other security issues.

At a news conference, Chernomyrdin said Yeltsin, who has not been carrying out a regular work schedule for months, is nevertheless "recovering and oversees all the necessary issues. The president is active politically, he meets at the highest level, and he does everything that he has to do in the country ... But he needs some time to completely recover."

Chernomyrdin said adding new members to NATO would inflame public opinion in Russia against the West and "will make the situation in Europe more complicated." But he repeated his view that, over time, the disagreement can be resolved amicably. He said he expects "a serious, legally binding document between NATO and Russia. But at the same time, we say, 'Do not rush things.'"

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# Church Comeback In Changing Cuba

**By Douglas Farah**

THE Rev. Oscar Perez surveyed his parish church with obvious pride, as dozens of people sat in small groups to discuss the Bible before breaking up to attend the Mass he was about to celebrate.

"Our situation has changed from one of a certain degree of confrontation with the state to being much more open," the Roman Catholic priest said, sitting on a bare wooden pew, amid the cacophony of voices of Bible classes. "Things have changed enormously. Everyone used to try to hide their faith. Now you can see they practice it openly."

After decades of hostility, relations between the Roman Catholic Church and Cuba's government are undergoing the most profound change since the 1959 revolution led by Fidel Castro. Church workers and diplomats say a new tolerance for religious activity and social programs represents the most likely means in 36 years of introducing elements of change in the rigid Marxist system.

Nothing symbolized the change in relations more graphically than Castro's audience with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican late last year and the decision to allow the pontiff to visit the island in January 1998.

"Two years ago, the visit would have been a real risk," a Latin American diplomat said. "Now the risk is acceptable."

Diplomats and government officials say the papal visit offers Castro a potential payoff. The pontiff has spoken out strongly against the 34-year-old U.S. economic embargo against the island and recent measures such as the Helms-Burton Act, which strengthen and broaden it.

A senior government official, calling Helms-Burton — which seeks to penalize companies that do business with Cuba — "an act of war," said: "Any allies we have in that war are welcome, and the pope has been outspoken on that."

Diplomats and analysts noted that the church, because of its international ties, moral authority and organization across Cuba, has in many ways displaced the small, divided groups of political dissidents who have been pushing for broad political change.

"The dissidents lose their importance if there is a dialogue with the principal moral force in the country," said the European diplomat.

The church is a growing power, not only because of its surging membership but also because it is providing medical and food aid. Caritas, the Catholic charity operating here since 1992, has distributed about $7 million in aid during each of the last two years. Much of the aid is in medical supplies that help keep the nation's vaunted health care program from fraying further.

In Perez's church on the outskirts of Havana, in a working-class neighborhood, 70 people are taking classes in preparation for their first Communion, and the pews are almost always full — something Perez said was unthinkable just a year ago. Sales of Bibles, hymn books, religious medallions and crucifixes are at an all-time high, he said.

According to Catholic Church statistics, there were about 25,000 baptisms in Havana in 1989. In 1995, there were almost 36,000.

"What we are seeing is a spiritual revolution here," said Enrique Lopez Oliva, a professor of religion at the University of Havana. "The government understands that if it tries to control everything it may, in the end, lose much."

Orlando Marquez, editor of Palabra Nueva, the publication of the archdiocese of Havana, attributed the church's growth to "disappointment and disenchantment" of many people during hard times.

"People are looking for spiritual rather than material solutions," he said. "They have found the materialist offerings of socialism do not satisfy fully."

Many church leaders went into exile after 1961, when Castro declared Cuba a Marxist-Leninist — and therefore atheist — state. According to Shawn T. Malone, associate director of the Georgetown University Cuba Project, individual clergy were persecuted, religious services were obstructed and church property was vandalized.



**Faith restored . . . Church workers perceive a new tolerance for religious activity in Cuba** PHOTOGRAPH: JULIO ETCHART

But the attitude of the state gradually changed. In 1992, the constitution was amended so that Cuba was defined as a secular, not Marxist, state, and it was declared that religious believers could be party members. The government also took the unprecedented step of sanctioning the opening of the Union of Catholic Press, a group of journalists who produce church publications.

Several problems remain in church-state relations. The state does not allow "house churches," those outside church buildings, and is often slow in authorizing the construction of new churches. The state licenses the importation of church materials such as Bibles, and publishing costs set by the state make mass publication of them impossible.

Church leaders said they are wary but optimistic that the changes will be long-lived, that the door opened will not be so easy to shut.

"The essence of the position of the church has not changed," said Marquez. "The church has always talked of the need for dialogue, and now we finally have a chance for serious dialogue."

# Progress in AIDS Drugs

**David Brown**

A YEAR ago, AIDS researchers learned that combination drug therapy for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection reduces the amount of this virus in the bloodstream to the point where it can no longer be detected by even the most sensitive tests.

At the recent Fourth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Washington, several research groups reported that "triple therapy" — three drugs, one of them usually a protease inhibitor — also greatly reduces the amount of virus in the body's widespread lymphoid tissues, which are a far larger reservoir of HIV than blood.

Presentations at the conference showed that in many people on triple therapy, virus counts fell more than a thousand-fold in lymph nodes, tonsils and "gut-associated lymphoid tissue." The rate at which the virus disappears from those tissues, however, is very slow.

For that reason, several researchers said they wouldn't consider taking an AIDS patient off triple therapy until the person had had at least three years of apparently successful treatment.

The best-known candidates for such a bold step are 24 men being treated by Martin Markowitz and other physicians at the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center in New York. All were put on triple therapy within 90 days of infection. Eighteen remain in the study. Some have had no virus detectable in their bloodstream for close to two years. Lymphoid tissues and semen, another sanctuary for HIV, are being sampled in these patients.

Only if there's no evidence of virus replication in all sites — and only if a patient chooses — will the drugs be stopped to see if the infection has been eradicated.

# Audubon's Marsh in France Endangered

**Charles Trueheart**

JOHN James Audubon, America's greatest observer, collector and painter of native bird life, used to neglect his studies in school so he could roam the fields and marshes around his French home town of Coueron.

Every evening, according to one of Audubon's biographers, "he would return with his lunch basket laden with the spoils of the day — birds' nests, eggs and curiosities of every sort destined for the museum into which his room had already been transformed."

Audubon left Coueron and France in 1806 to make his name in the young nation across the ocean, most famously with his majestic book Birds Of America. But the marsh that first inspired his art and his vocation still clucks and twitters in the estuary of the Loire River, far downstream from the great chateaux.

Hawk and heron, teal and lapwing make a habitat in the tall brush and skimpy trees. But like many an unglamorous wetland in the great river estuaries of France, the Audubon Marsh is in danger of ecological extinction.

Tucked between Nantes and St. Nazaire, two once-great but now stagnant port cities on France's Atlantic coast, the 750-acre marsh that wraps around Coueron has been designated for future use as a dump for the nasty muck drained from the bottom of the Loire ship channel that serves the ports. Were that to happen, the flora and fauna that eke out a living where young Audubon played hooky would be rubbed out. The great birdman, at a guess, would be dismayed.

That is the reed at which Michel Chomienne is grasping as he seeks to protect the marsh from what he sees as an ill-considered economic development strategy and to preserve it as a piece of cultural heritage.

"Audubon has been completely forgotten in France," Chomienne said — just as his French roots are largely unknown in the United States. "Yet the French are proud of their contributions to humanity's 'grandeur' and convinced of the notion of 'French genius.' Our leaders have to recognize that you can't neglect the memory of a man who brought so much to the American nation."

Audubon was born Jean-Jacques Fougere Audubon in 1785 in what is now Haiti. His father was a French seaman, his mother an American Creole. He was taken to France in 1789, and, growing up here by the marsh, he began to draw birds at 15. When he was 20, he emigrated to the United States. His father set him up in business there, but Audubon soon abandoned it for full-time bird portraiture and equally tireless promotion of his work.

To draw attention to the threatened marsh, Chomienne, a Coueron resident and former Nantes-St. Nazaire port authority executive, is trying to drum up a little pride in the illustrious native son — and to elicit the right kind of pressure from, among others, the president of France and the National Audubon Society of the United States.

France lags far behind its neighbors in its environmental protections. "One can say categorically that the French detest nature," French ornithologist Jean-Francois Terrasse told Le Nouvel Observateur magazine. "Those who protect it are always accused of being against people."

The European Union recently said it would pursue legal action against France for non-compliance with European directives in the area of bird-life conservation. Despite pressures from Brussels, the French government has yet to certify many of the most important wetlands in France as zones worthy of special protection, preferring to keep them available for potential industrial, shipping, nuclear power and other development.

Under pressure from the port and other pro-development politicians, the French government thus far has excluded the Audubon Marsh from protective zoning.

Lots of people in Coueron, Chomienne allowed, may not care much about bird habitats or Jean-Jacques Audubon. But they like a pristine place such as Audubon Marsh to fish and catch small game.

A succulent symbol of Franco-avian relations is a bunting of the French southwest called the ortolan. No bigger than a child's fist, it is trapped, fattened in the dark, dashed with Armagnac, roasted and eaten whole, bones and all.

It is illegal in France to traffic in the ortolan, an endangered species. Nevertheless, people do. The current prime minister, Alain Juppé, spoke whimsically in a recent Elle magazine interview of having done a "wicked" thing: eaten contraband ortolans at a recent five-hour lunch — just to go along with a local custom, he said.

As they fly against such deeply rooted conventions, the people of Coueron are hoping that Audubon Marsh might be a modest attraction to ecotourists, birders and cyclists passing through this pleasantly level part of France. Chomienne and the other Audubon Marsh people have launched a Web site — http://www.audubon.in-net.fr/ — to disseminate information about the endangered marsh.







# The Education of a Publisher

**Jill Ker Conway**

PERSONAL HISTORY
By Katharine Graham
Knopf. 642pp. $29.95

KATHARINE GRAHAM'S account of her life has something of interest for everyone. Of course it is the ultimate Washington "inside story." But much that makes this a compelling read lies far outside the Beltway. For this serious effort to make some reckoning of a long and varied life throws more light on the psychology of women, and the profound changes brought about by the women's movement, than a dozen tomes filled with psychological jargon.

The astonishing reality that Graham documents in great detail is that this woman, whose managerial talents rescued a teetering enterprise and turned it into one of this country's most powerful and admired media empires, was unaware of her managerial skills or her capacity for leadership until well into mid-life.

What Graham describes rings true for those of us old enough to remember the culture that taught women that their relationship with a man was their life. If he was troubled psychologically, drank too much, or seemed given to high-risk financial gambles, it was the wife's fault for not engineering, no matter what the odds, the perfect marriage.

Some will find it difficult to credit that even after 23 years of marriage to Philip Graham, a man with erratic mood swings, accompanied by increasingly bizarre behavior, she didn't learn enough about manic-depressive illness to exercise her own judgment about her husband's treatment. But in the late '50s and early '60s mental illness was still a dreaded family secret.

"It bothers me," she writes, "that I was so passive about the nature of Phil's illness and so accepting of Farber [his analyst] for so long. I'm not sure why I didn't insist on more of an explanation." But her training in passivity was too deep to be overcome easily, let alone to allow her to look critically and with detachment at her brilliant, manipulative, manic husband who was determined to leave the hospital and end his life.



**Clockwise from left; The Washington Post building; Agnes Meyer; Katharine Graham with her son Donald; family portraits; Philip Graham with Eugene Meyer; with President Kennedy; with Truman Capote; with Ben Bradlee** COLLAGE BY RANDY MAYS

And, we learn, though the author doesn't say it, he chose a place and a method of suicide that would result in the greatest possible grief to her.

In Anglo-Saxon culture, it has always been permissible for women to exhibit strength and discover managerial talent when widowed, or when the family has been struck by tragedy. So we watch with fascination the emergence of a new woman, like some brightly colored butterfly from the safe concealment of a dun-colored chrysalis, as Katharine Graham begins to take up the reins at The Washington Post and its affiliates. Her task was made more complicated by the fact that her father — Eugene Meyer, publisher of The Post — displaying classic patriarchal attitudes, had given her husband, not his daughter, the controlling interest in The Washington Post Company.

Once this legal issue has been successfully negotiated, the story becomes more familiar as the narrator quickly becomes the powerful Washington figure we all know from media headlines and photographs. What makes it such pleasant reading is the opportunity Graham gives the reader to trace the process of her transformation. Occasionally the reader wonders whether her social insecurity can possibly be genuine — as, for instance, when she has her hair and makeup done by Kenneth (the "in" hairdresser of the day) before donning a Bergdorf copy of a Balmain dress to appear as guest of honor at Truman Capote's celebrated black-and-white masked ball. The shrewd Capote knew exactly who would become the important woman of the moment, but his guest still didn't. At Kenneth's, she tells us, "I was watching while he pinned curls over the beautiful Marisa Berenson's head, one by one. Finally, he got to me, and the wait was worth it. I wound up looking my very best. Of course, in that company, compared with the sophisticated beauties who blanketed the ballroom, my very best still looked like an orphan."

The choice of that word — orphan — is interesting because it sends the reader back to the earlier chapters of the memoir, to Graham's childhood, and her difficult relationship with her mother. Agnes Meyer held her children to extremely exacting standards of deportment, expected the girls to be beautiful and socially successful, while undercutting them in any intellectual interests they developed.

As the fourth child in the family, Katharine Graham managed to escape excessive parental notice, living in a world where she spent more time with servants than parents, unwilling to engage in any form of rivalry with a flamboyant mother who was regarded as a great beauty. Graham's resulting low self-esteem was partially remedied by an initially happy marriage, but reactivated in even more acute form when her manipulative husband began denigrating her before guests and before their children.

Thus, although a reader's initial response to the orphan image is to ask, Just how much of the world's possessions and talents does this woman need before she feels secure?, on reflection, the image rings true. There is a Cinderella-like quality to this story, although it is one with a feminist ending, in which Cinderella triumphs and surpasses the prince in the management of affairs of state.

Once Katharine Graham is in complete control at The Washington Post — publisher as well as president of the company — the narrative picks up speed. First of all, as a senior woman executive, she had to face and deal daily with the issues women faced in an extremely sexist workplace. She tells us she was slow to learn how to deal with them in her own life, let alone how to lean on all-white male management to change, and in public she was a defender of management from challenges of discrimination, which she now concedes were justified.

But events would not wait for her slowly developing consciousness to evolve. In late June of 1971, she was faced with conflicting advice from editorial staff and the company's lawyers about whether The Washington Post should publish the Pentagon Papers. To do so was to face certain confrontation with the U.S. government — because a legal decision in New York had resulted in a court order temporarily restraining the New York Times from further publication of the papers. The decision she now faced presented a textbook case of freedom of the press. What made it even more contentious for The Washington Post was that its parent company was in the process of going public, so that the decision to publish could jeopardize the public offering and bring harsh retribution from federal regulators. Events had conspired to make it impossible for The Post's principal owner and publisher to deny her own agency any longer. She acted decisively.

"I could tell from the passion of the editors' views that we were in for big trouble on the editorial floor if we didn't publish. . . . At the same time that the editors were saying, seriatim, 'You've got to do it.' Paul Ignatius [the president of the newspaper] was standing beside me, repeating — each time more insistently — 'Wait a day, wait a day.' . . . Frightened and tense, I took a big gulp and said, 'Go ahead, go ahead, go ahead. Let's go. Let's publish.' "

FROM that point on, there could be no denying, even to herself, who was in charge. Graham's account of the Watergate affair and The Post's reporting of it shows her customary scrupulous effort to see the issues from all points of view. Her blow-by-blow account of the unfolding scandal makes gripping reading — a story only she can tell.

There are naturally some defects in this fascinating narrative. Graham is clearly writing for historians, and takes great pains to cite the archival record fully. This laudable effort to cite the sources sometimes makes the reader wish she would just tell the story in her own incisive prose. Her understandable interest in her own passivity at earlier stages of her life undermines or downplays its central tragedy. So the reader tends to forget what a personal triumph just staying sane and balanced must have been for someone experiencing the roller coaster of life with an untreated manic depressive. Clearly it trained her to ride the roller coasters of public life with courage, but for the learning she must have paid a very high price.

# A Home Away From Home

**Ruth Behar**

A CENTURY OF CUBAN WRITERS IN FLORIDA
Edited by Carolina Hospital and Jorge Cantera
Pineapple Press. 238pp. Paperback, $14.95

THE anthology A Century Of Cuban Writers In Florida marks a major turning point. It is the first literary anthology to argue forcefully for the right of Cubans to sing their laments and tell their stories on American soil.

Writings produced by Cubans who came to the United States fleeing the Revolution in the early 1960s focused on nostalgia for the abandoned island. They were published in Spanish and addressed to other Cubans who shared the same sentiments about the loss of a homeland and the dream of eventual return.

But as the century moves quickly to its end and the hope of returning to Cuba "next year" — cherished by the exile community for close to four decades — is postponed to an ever more uncertain future, there is growing recognition, as this anthology asserts, that Cubans are here to stay, indeed have been here to stay for a long time, "here" being Florida, primarily Miami, but also Key West, Tampa, St. Augustine, and Tallahassee. And the written language for communicating this Cuban presence is now English, even though most Cuban authors are bilingual.

A number of the authors represented, indeed, write primarily in English, such as the late Jose Yglesias, who was born in Tampa. Many of the younger writers came to the U.S. as children, were educated in English, and now work as teachers in the U.S. academy. Yet many poems and stories in A Century Of Cuban Writers In Florida are translated, for the first time, from Spanish, with the aim of reaching a wider audience in the United States, which too often undermines the Cuban presence as a recent or temporary phenomenon, unaware that a long historical tradition has linked Florida and Cuba since early colonial times.

Editors Carolina Hospital, a poet, and Jorge Cantera, an independent researcher, do an excellent job in their introduction of establishing a genealogy for the poetry and prose of the 33 Cuban writers included in their anthology. They convincingly show that Florida has been home to Cuban intellectuals, writers and readers since the 19th century. It was among the 19th-century Cuban working communities of Florida that Jose Marti launched the struggle for Cuban independence. And it was in those same communities that respect for the written word was expressed by cigar workers, who donated a portion of their wages to hire *lectores* (readers) to read aloud from newspapers and literary classics during factory hours.

Later, in the 20th century, Cuban writers continued to settle in Florida at key moments of political instability during the 1930s and 1950s, with the largest influx arriving after the 1959 revolution and settling in Miami. Movement to and from the island used to be fluid, in a way it ceased to be after 1959, and some writers were exiled more than once, like the poet Heberto Padilla, who lived in Miami during the Batista dictatorship, returned optimistically to Cuba at the start of the revolution, and found his way back to the United States after suffering political repression.

This anthology marks a turning point in yet another way. Although the research and translations that led to the book were made possible in part by the support of the Cuban-American National Foundation, a powerful exile organization headed by Jorge Mas Canosa, which rejects the revolutionary regime and eschews contact with the island, there are no overt political diatribes in the book. There is only one mention of Fidel Castro and it is in the most neutral of tones. Yet the book is dedicated to Felix Varela, the "father of Cuban nationalism," a 19th-century journalist, philosopher and priest who spent his last years in St. Augustine, and who, we are told, "refused to return to Cuba while it remained subjugated to tyranny."

The difficulty with any anthology is to make the collage of voices cohere, and at the same time to give enough of a feeling for the particular styles and nuances of the various writers from the snatches that have been woven together. While the editors strive to demonstrate a connection between Cuban writers of the last century and of our own, what stands out is the disparity between 19th-century concerns for the abolition of slavery, the meaning of democracy, and the quest for national independence, and 20th-century concerns with cultural legacies, the remapping of memory, and the remaking of self within imaginary homelands.

The quality of the writing is uneven and the selections are often too brief to do proper justice to the individual writers. But the reader will be grateful for the many important Cuban voices of Florida that are represented. Lydia Cabrera, a folklorist who specialized in Afro-Cuban themes, is here, as are younger writers such as Suarez, an assistant professor of creative writing at Florida State University in Tallahassee, and Silvia Curbelo, a poet in Tampa who gently and humbly reminds us, "A dropped shoe is an island."

# From blackboard to bush

Teachers who seek jobs abroad must be willing to work in and out of class, writes **Peter Kingston**

*IF YOU ARE* the sort of teacher still shuddering from your last class outing to the seaside or the local museum, you will not be begging to lead 30 teenagers into the African bush for a week.

So you probably have not applied for one of the jobs they are currently seeking to fill at the International School in Moshi, Tanzania.

This week the school, situated halfway up Mount Kilimanjaro, is setting its recruiting stall up in a London hotel with 121 other international schools from all over the world.

"We're looking for outdoor types," said the head, Geoff Lloyd. "All our students climb Kilimanjaro and we regularly take them camping in the bush."

Like many of the school principals spending five days (February 12-16) interviewing candidates for a thousand vacancies across the globe, he has certain qualities in mind — on top of the good teaching qualifications and a demonstrable interest in other countries which all say are indispensable. Few will be insisting on advanced fieldcraft, but all will be looking for a certain type of teacher.

"They want versatile people," says Jim McKay, of the European Council of International Schools (Ecis), the biggest association of international schools, which is organising the five-day event.

"If you come abroad you've got to be the sort of person who says a glass is half-full, not half-empty," declares Dennis Smith, principal of the American International School in Bolivia.

Every other day, life in Cochabamba, Bolivia's "city of the eternal spring" — so-called because of its permanently clement climate — can deal what in western Europe or the United States would be considered a setback, he says. "The water might not be working when you wake up, so you don't get your shower before doing your day's teaching."

Mr Smith packs the essential requirements for the six staff he is looking for into an impressive piece of jargon — "good tolerance to ambiguity and cognitive dissonance", which roughly means being able to field anything chucked at them.

Jim McKay, who spent 16 years in teaching and education administration in Saudi Arabia before moving to the UK, sums it up: "If teachers are set in their ways and depend on fixed routines, international education isn't for them."

It does, though, offer more and more teachers, young and not so young, a golden chance to get to know other parts of the world and their cultures. The number of international schools is increasing every year. In 1981, Ecis had 148 member schools. This year the number has reached 450 and is still rising.

A lot of this growth, according to Mr McKay, is the direct effect of creeping globalisation. Although everybody's first image of globalisation is of international finance and continent-straddling multinational companies, its advance would be much slower without teachers in the engine room. "When major corporations send their staff overseas, two things are vital: good housing for the families and acceptable schools for the kids," he says.

Globalisation's effects are also evident in the rapid expansion of some of the Ecis schools. The American School in the Polish capital, Warsaw, has more than quadrupled in size since 1990 and now has 750 youngsters, aged from four to 19, on its rolls.

Its director, Tony Horton, who is interviewing for 16 teaching and administration staff, echoed his colleagues' shopping-lists of criteria. At a minimum, he wants keen staff qualified to deliver the International Baccalaureat and the American curricula, a common combination offered by the schools. In addition, they must be prepared to muck in fully with a wide range of after-school activities.

International schools frequently double as community centres because there are few or no external facilities for sports or clubs for pupils in the local areas. These schools also often have to be social centres for the expatriate communities that provide them with many of their pupils.

High energy levels and good health are requisites for many of these postings, which typically last



Class apart . . . Headmasters of schools outside Britain are looking for versatile teachers

for two years with opportunities for extension. In some schools the bulk of the staff are between their mid-20s and mid-30s. In others, the age-band is much wider.

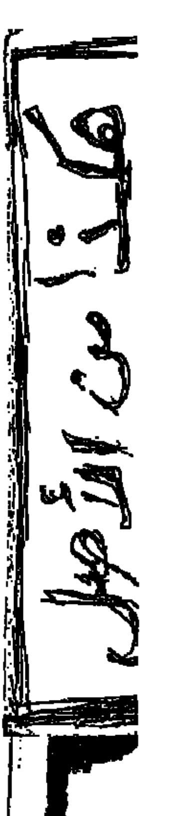
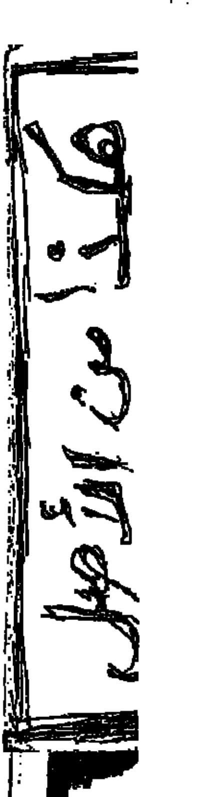
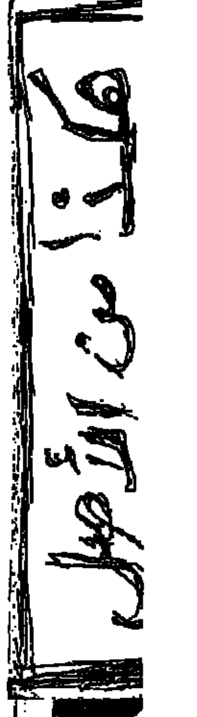
The principals I talked to said that they welcomed applications from older teachers, including those who had taken early retirement in the UK and were now looking for fresh challenges. At his previous school in Ethiopia, Dr Horton said there was a sprinkling of teachers in their late 50s and early 60s.

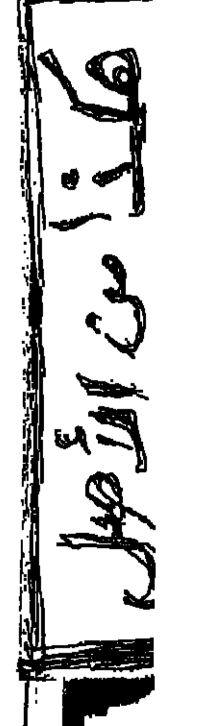
Three years ago, at the age of 50, Geoff Lloyd quit his headship of a secondary school in Norwich to take up his Tanzania post. His pupils are perhaps different from a common perception of the international students as children of diplomats and multinational businessfolk. They include the children of doctors, missionaries, aid workers and teachers. There are also sons and daughters of people working in safari tourism, a recent growth industry.

But however disparate, international school children share characteristics which, says Mr McKay, prove attractive to teachers accustomed to problems in some UK state schools. Invariably the students have parents who take a keen interest in their progress and demand excellence of their education. "Many are movers and shakers in this global society for whom war and national boundaries mean little"

And apart from the salaries — often, but not always, higher than teachers get in the UK, he says — the free accommodation and the free air ticket home every year, there is a further pleasant and unfamiliar bonus for British teachers who venture overseas. "In many parts of the world, teachers are valued, if not highly revered."






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# The grande dame of US diplomacy

## Pamela Harriman

*THE* finery of the American embassy in Paris was a wonderfully suitable setting for the last days of Pamela Harriman, who has died at the age of 76. Before her ambassadorial appointment by a grateful President Clinton, this daughter of the English aristocracy had enjoyed a remarkable career as courtesan and power-broker more suited to the court of Louis XIV than the dreary chancelleries of 20th century democracy.

The list of prominent men known to have shared her bed reads like a Who's Who of the century, among them Sir Charles Portal, chief of the wartime air staff, US millionaire John Hay Witney, broadcaster Ed Murrow, Aly Khan, Elie de Rothschild, and the Italian industrialist, Gianni Agnelli.

They shared her favours at various times with the three men she married — Sir Winston Churchill's son Randolph (by whom she had her only child, Winston, now a Conservative MP), the Broadway producer Leland Hayward, and the millionaire politician and diplomat, Averell Harriman.

There were few signs of such a particular future in the early upbringing of the 11th Baron Digby's eldest daughter. The family, though not quite on the breadline, lost its 40,000 acres in Ireland when the country became a republic. The ancestral home, Geashill Castle, was burned down in the Troubles, to the apparent relief of Lady Digby, who hated the place.

So Pamela, who was born in Surrey, was brought up in Dorset, and educated in Suffolk and at the Sorbonne. Neither parent was familiar with the metropolitan social scene and the natural assumption was that their daughter would join the ranks of the horsey creatures who inhabited the pages of Tatler and Country Life.

But the outbreak of the war, as for so many others, brought a startling change in Pamela's life. She was introduced to Randolph Churchill at a party when she was 19, and he immediately proposed to her, a custom he had pursued with most presentable young women. She decided the world he inhabited was the one for her, and they were married within weeks. But she rapidly discovered he was a drunken boor who, in spite of his high connections, was up to his eyes in debt.

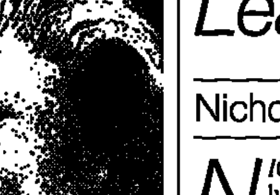
He achieved a quick escape, however, when he was posted to Egypt as an intelligence officer with the general staff while she turned herself into the glamorous daughter-in-law of the new prime minister, the man chosen to save the nation. The affairs flowed thick and fast and, once the Americans arrived, so did the wartime luxuries.

Her principal lover was Averell Harriman, then acting as President Roosevelt's envoy in London, supervising the use of American aid. But his lavish support of her lifestyle still did not ensure that his was her only liaison. Not surprisingly, her marriage to Randolph barely lasted beyond his return from the war: she divorced him in 1946 and embarked on a long affair with the industrialist Gianni Agnelli.

In 1960 she moved to New York where her affair with Leland Hayward led to his divorce and their marriage. That lasted until his death 11 years later, when she found that most of his capital had been used to sustain their affluent lifestyle. Within weeks she had resumed her affair with Harriman, and she married him before the end of that year.

She gave the impression that everything that had gone before had been an apprenticeship for the role she now assumed. In 1971, she had become an American citizen, and the combination of her husband's vast wealth and the status he enjoyed within the Democratic Party enabled her to become one of America's grand hostesses.

The 1970s may have been lean years for the party, with the Republicans Nixon and Ford being followed into the White House by the maverick Democrat Jimmy Carter, but that did not stop Pamela Harriman building up a vast political and social power base across the country.



Pamela Harriman: much more to her than mere sex appeal

She began to collect trophy appointments as she had once collected lovers. She blossomed to fill the Democratic horizon to such an extent that, by the time Harriman died in 1986, she was a political force in her own right.

She was appointed to the Democratic National Committee after the party had failed to keep George Bush out of the White House in 1988 and made an invaluable contribution to its preparation for the 1992 campaign. There is a vast store of improbable folklore about her role in securing the nomination for Bill Clinton. What is unquestionably true is that she managed to raise some $12 million for his campaign.

Her reward was to become Clinton's ambassador in France, whose language she spoke fluently and whose people regarded her past with a sort of awed admiration. With her chameleon-like ability to turn the right colour at the appropriate time, she was a huge success. She showed enormous skill at smoothing down the always prickly relationship between the two countries and was admired by almost any of the French who encountered her.

**Harold Jackson**

Pamela Beryl Harriman, diplomat, born March 20, 1920; died February 5, 1997

# Leading from the front

## Nicholas Hinton

*NICHOLAS HINTON*, who has died of a heart attack in Croatia at the age of 54, was one of the most respected, energetic and successful figures in the British voluntary sector. In recent years he was becoming more and more prominent in the international arena.

He was best known for running Save the Children, from 1985-95. Since then he had been president of the newly formed International Crisis Group, which attempts to prevent and alleviate such disasters as Rwanda and Bosnia. It is fair to say that his energy, his commitment and his humour had put the ICG on the map, and would have kept it there. Mort Abramowitz, president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, who jump-started the ICG, said Nicholas Hinton was "a wonderfully dedicated public servant".

Hinton was the son of a West Country canon of the Church of England. His parents' beliefs and obvious piety were an important influence on him throughout his life. He went to Salisbury Cathedral Choir School, then Marlborough and Selwyn College, Cambridge. As a child he had hoped to have a career in music, but after his voice broke he decided that musical administration was more his scene. He called himself a lapsed flautist and for a spell in the sixties ran the Edington Music Festival.

His Church of England childhood remained with him throughout his life. One profile in the eighties quoted an admirer: "He always thinks strategically. But everything he does is imbued with Christian values. He looks for people to live lives of rectitude."

Throughout his own life he was interested above all in public service and he performed it with flair and authority.

After Cambridge, where he studied law and thought of becoming a barrister, he went to work at an intermediate treatment scheme for young offenders at Northorpe Hall, near Leeds. This was a pilot scheme to divert juvenile offenders from custodial sentences. It helped lead to the introduction of intermediate treatment (non-custodial sentences) in the Children and Young Person's Act of 1969.

He spent the early seventies as first a training officer and then director of Nacro, the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, formed in 1966, the key non-governmental organisation concerned with the after-care of offenders.

This was followed by eight years as director of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, to which all British NGOs belong, which exists to pressure the Government, which funds it.

He then undertook the role of director of Save the Children. He transformed and expanded the organisation. Out went cosiness, in came forceful and aggressive leadership. Save the Children had its most successful years both in terms of income raised and its international profile. In his first five years, the income rose from £16.5 million to a high £113 million.

There were those who found his up-front style combative and in 1994 he parted company from the Millennium Commission even before he had taken up the post of chief executive, to which he had been appointed. He and the commissioners had quickly fallen out. The chemistry, so right for a charity such as Save the Children, did not work with the commissioners.

The Millennium Commission's loss was in every sense the International Crisis Group's gain. Hinton was ideal as the first president because he was always intellectually challenging. At meetings of the trustees he was swift and efficient, though never impolite.

Nicholas Hinton was a stylish man and a sharp dresser. He was also a devoted family man. He was married in 1971; he and his wife Deborah have one daughter Josie, who is still at school.

His loss is immense.

**William Shawcross**

Nicholas John Hinton, charity administrator, born March 15, 1942; died January 21, 1997







The world's poor see the downside to the Americans' level playing field. **Kevin Watkins** reports from the Philippines on how free trade is rigged for the rich

# Fast route to poverty

*DAN GLICKMAN*, the United States agriculture secretary, likes to talk about playing fields. As he told the world food summit last November: "Our farmers plant for the world, and want to compete in a global market free of trade barriers. They need a level playing field; and the world needs our exports to eradicate hunger." Put differently, if it's good for US Agriculture Inc, it's good for the world's poor — and free trade is best for both.

In Mindanao, the largest island of the Philippines archipelago, you get a different picture. Rosa Laranjo is one of the 1.2 million peasant farmers in the Philippines whose households depend upon selling maize for their survival. Most live in Mindanao, working on scattered hillside plots in areas of severe ecological degradation.

In her village of thatched huts sitting on the steep hillsides above the Allah Valley, Laranjo is losing hope. "I don't know about world markets. And I don't understand how the Americans can sell us maize so cheaply. All I know is that we cannot compete. Our prices are going down, our children are going hungry, and our community is dying."

Laranjo's story is a microcosm of a broader tragedy. As governments in developing countries embark upon a Gadarene rush to lower trade barriers and fulfil the American dream of a global market in farm produce, vulnerable smallholder producers are being left to compete against the industrialised, and heavily subsidised farming systems of North America and Europe. Silently, relentlessly, and away from the glare of the world's media, "free trade" is displacing communities and destroying their livelihoods with all the ruthless efficiency of a civil war.

The problem in the Philippines can be traced to an ambitious liberalisation programme. In the past, import restrictions protected domestic food producers from competition in an effort to bolster rural employment and national food self-sufficiency. Today, these restrictions are being swept away. Under its commitments to the World Trade Organisation, the government is planning to lower import barriers to half their present level over the next six years.

What does this mean for local producers? In a word, disaster. In a recent research report, Oxfam estimated that the average household incomes of maize farmers will be reduced by as much as 30 per cent over the next six years as cheap imports from the US drive down prices in local markets.

The social consequences will be devastating. Up to half a million livelihoods are under immediate threat. This is in a context where one-quarter of all maize-producing households already lack sufficient income for adequate nutrition, and where one-third of the children in these households suffer from malnutrition.

The loss of income caused by cheap maize imports will inevitably translate into deteriorating health, worsening child nutrition, and, ultimately, lost lives. Many will join the ranks of refugees from free trade, migrating in search of work. They will head to the sprawling slums of Manila, or to the vast commercial estates of Del Monte and other corporations, which dominate the most fertile areas of Mindanao.

Instead of producing food for themselves on their own land, those lucky enough to find work will be employed as casual labourers producing pineapples, bananas and vegetables to line Western supermarket shelves. All of which will doubtless be widely celebrated as yet another victory for comparative advantage and free trade. After all, why produce food yourself if you can buy it more cheaply elsewhere? And you can't buy it cheaper than in the US. In the absence of trade restrictions, maize produced in the Mid-West and shipped halfway round the world could be marketed at less than half the price of maize grown in Mindanao.

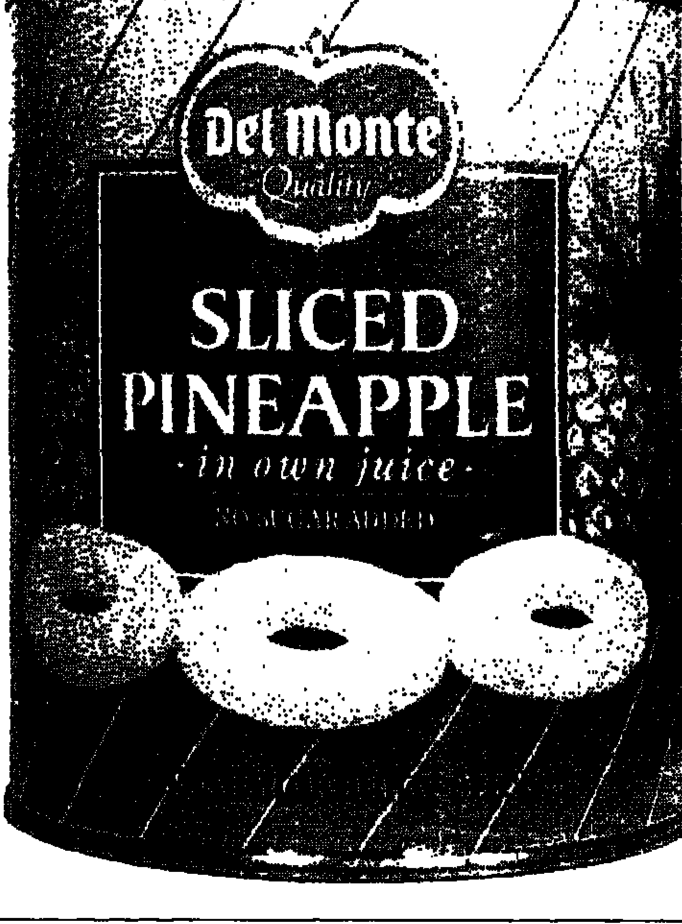
For the US, the case for free trade is self-evident. One out of every three acres in American agriculture now produces for export, generating in excess of $40 billion a year in foreign exchange. Farm policy makers and the giant conglomerates such as Cargill, which control the marketing of US grain, need foreign markets to absorb domestic surpluses.

The Pacific Rim region, in which the Philippines is located, offers particularly mouth-watering prospects. It already accounts for two-thirds of US farm exports — and corporate analysts believe it could be absorbing far more. Hence the drive for free markets and a level playing field.

The problem with all this is that the "free" market in world agriculture does not exist, and that US supremacy in world markets derives less from comparative advantage than comparative access to subsidies. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, each US farmer receives a subsidy of about $29,000. This is roughly 120 times the average income of maize farmers in the Philippines. The upshot is that Cargill can offer US surpluses for sale at prices equivalent to half the cost of production — destroying local agriculture and creating a captive market in the process.

Throughout the developing world, "free trade" is creating winners and losers. The winners are to be found among the corporate grain traders who market US and European surpluses, the big farmers who scoop up the bulk of production subsidies, and the chemical companies who provide the inputs that produce the surpluses, and which destroy the environment. The losers are to be found in rural communities, where desperately poor people like Rosa Laranjo are competing in a market that is rigged against them.

Level playing field? This one runs all the way downhill from the US.




***MULTINATIONAL* corporations such as Dole and Del Monte are the linchpin of the Philippines "modernisation" plan, which aims to turn the country into an Asian tiger within a few years on the back of an agricultural boom, *writes Kevin Watkins.***

**Del Monte's vast plantations, which employ 8,000 people, are increasingly capital-intensive and are shedding workers while massively increasing their land holdings.**

**Mechanised harvesters are replacing cutters, and those lucky to find work have minimal social welfare provisions and more or less stagnant wages.**

**Meanwhile formerly independent corn farmers are being forced by low prices to switch to contract farming in order to produce export crops for corporations, and children suffer from malnutrition as the best land is increasingly used to feed consumers in the industrial world with luxury goods.**

**The area of the Philippines devoted to cultivating maize and rice is expected to shrink by half within a few years. The national plan looks good for corporations, but ominous for the country's people.**

PHOTOGRAPH GARRY WEASER

# Huff and pure puff

Bottled water was once scoffed at. Now they're selling air in oxygen bars. **Barbara Wickens** reports from Toronto

*FOR SOME* fad-followers, the latest trend is cigar bars, where the air is blue from Monte Cristos and other stogies. But in Toronto there's an alternative — the world's first "oxygen spa bar". It is a bright and airy place, with sage-coloured walls, a tranquil tropical fish tank and soothing jazz in the background. It is a bar where, instead of alcohol, patrons can get a kick out of breathing pure oxygen.

A typical visit starts with smiling "bartenders" clipping an oximeter — similar to a pulse monitor on an electronic stationary bicycle — on to the customer's finger, which is used to measure arterial oxygen. Then they open a package of plastic tubing (a new one for each customer), fitting one end in the customer's nose, the other to a plug in the bar connected to the custom-designed oxygen supply. The plastic cannula does not completely block the nasal passages, so the customer can just breathe regularly, chat with other patrons, and sip organic fruit juices. Those who wish for more privacy can relax on comfortable lounge chairs in separate booths. The cost: about US$12 for 20 minutes at the bar; or $15 for the same amount of time in a private room.



Breathe in . . . Shamila Hunter, left, and Lisa Charron at their O2 Spa Bar in Toronto PHOTOGRAPH: DICK LOEK

The 02 Spa Bar is the brainchild of Lisa Charron, aged 31, a former model, bartender and interior designer, and her friend Shamila Hunter, aged 34, a former television news camerawoman. About five years ago they were looking for a new business venture when they came up with the idea. "We thought wouldn't it be great if, instead of going into a smoke-filled bar, we did something good for ourselves?" recalls Charron. After several years of planning and development, the bar opened in March 1996.

There are similar establishments in Japan, but Charron says they are really "air bars", since they offer a mixture of air with 20 per cent oxygen. This is the same as plain air, but in heavily polluted cities even clean air may be considered to be worth paying for. In contrast, the 02 Spa Bar offers 99.9 per cent pure oxygen. "As far as we are aware, we are the first to offer medical-grade oxygen for non-medical reasons," Charron says.

The concept caught on immediately. Customers at the Toronto establishment include everyone from models to athletes to brokers — anyone, in fact, who believes that a dose of oxygen can enhance performance, relieve hangovers, migraine headaches, and generally fight stress. So far the bar has had more than 800 international enquiries, stretching from Korea to Germany, from people wanting franchises.

"We can hardly keep track," Charron says. And while she admits that she and Hunter have always thought big, imagining a chain of spa bars, for now, at least, they want to keep control. Still, they are expanding, opening five 02 Spa Bars in the coming months, three in New York and two in Los Angeles.

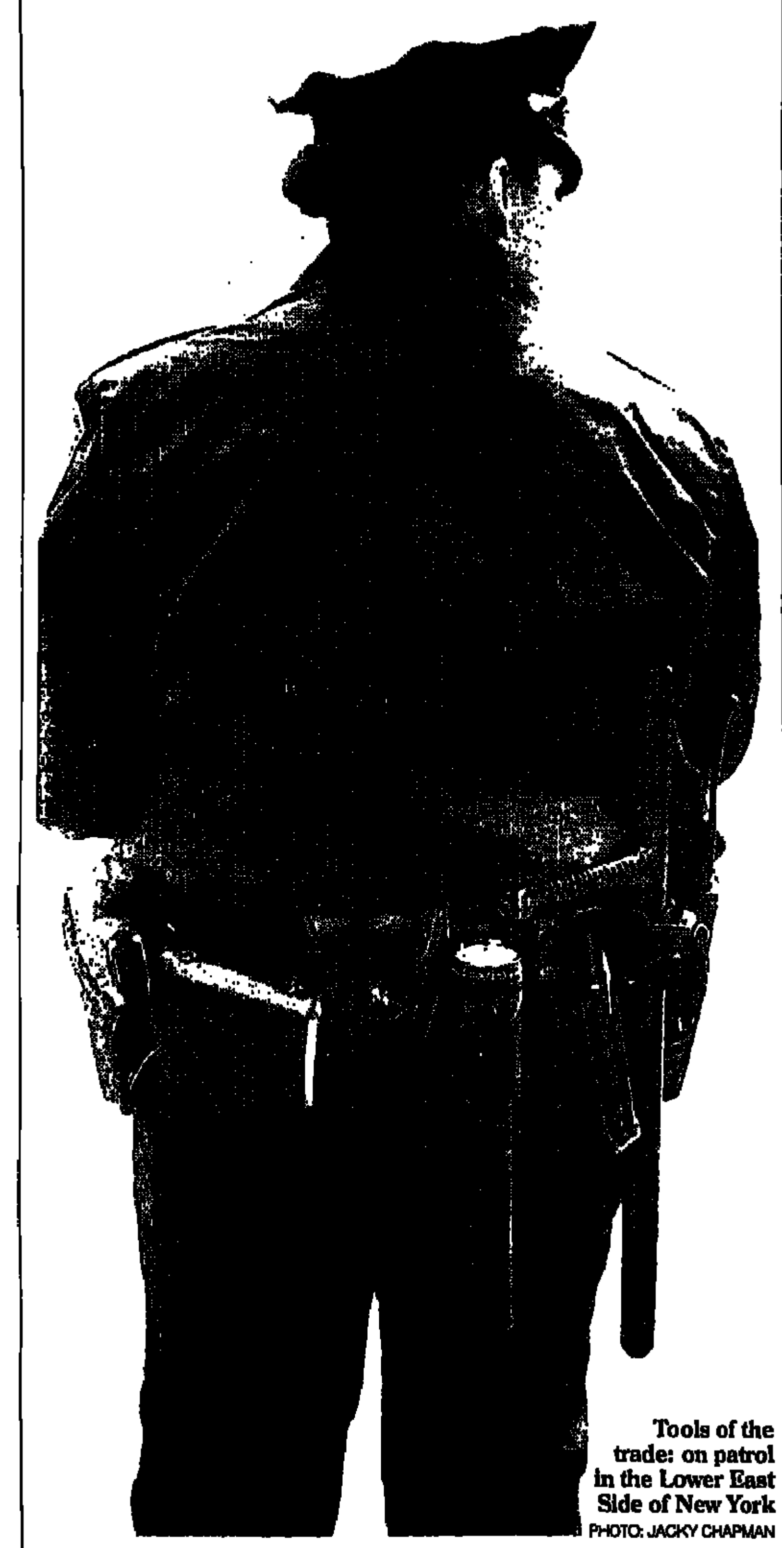
The spa bar is part of a larger trend, which sees oxygen as the newest cure-all. Some of the most expensive anti-ageing cosmetics, for instance, now list oxygen as an ingredient. Meanwhile hyperbaric chambers (that provide oxygen in a compressed atmosphere) are all the rage for the North American professional sports teams that can afford them to treat their injured multimillion-dollar players and get them back in the game as quickly as possible.

Still, not everyone is a believer. Dr Moran Campbell, professor emeritus of medicine at McMaster University in nearby Hamilton, Ontario, who is one of Canada's leading researchers into oxygen, doubts that hyperbaric chambers live up to the claims made for them. A spa bar is even less likely to provide any health benefits. "There is no study showing that puffing on oxygen does the normal, healthy person any good," he says.

Charron, however, is unfazed by such criticisms. "A lot of people have scoffed, but 10 years ago, people would have laughed at you if you said you were going to buy bottled water," she says. "A lot of doctors still think that vitamins are placebos." With bottled water and vitamins now a regular part of many people's diet — and multimillion dollar industries — can oxygen be far behind? Charron is counting on it.

# Swept away on a tide of zero tolerance

The British demand a visible police presence, but do they really want to follow the example of New York? **Rod Morgan** on a safer, more sensitive alternative



Tools of the trade: on patrol in the Lower East Side of New York
PHOTO: JACKY CHAPMAN

TONY BLAIR'S endorsement of "zero tolerance" policing is not just the latest attempt by New Labour to distance itself from the "soft on crime" skeletons in its Old Labour law and order cupboard, it also propagates some dangerous illusions about policing.

First, the terminology makes little sense. The police cannot enforce all the laws all the time, even if they want to; they just don't have the capacity. A recent Audit Commission study calculated that for every police officer on patrol there are 18,000 people, 77 miles of road, 7,500 houses, nine schools and 23 pubs. We calculate that there are also more than 100 recidivist offenders of the sort it is currently argued the police should target.

Or, to take another angle, every time the police arrest someone, their ensuing responsibilities mean that the officers involved are effectively lost from the streets for three to four hours.

In fact, "zero tolerance" is a misnomer. It doesn't mean enforcing all the laws. It involves highly selective enforcement. So-called zero tolerance policing is actually discriminatory intolerance of vulnerable nuisance groups operating in symbolic locations. There will be no zero tolerance initiatives in the white suites of the square mile of the City of London.

Zero tolerance policing, New York style, is also highly aggressive and confrontational. It is precisely what the police in Brixton, south London, have been moving away from over the past 10 years. A return would be disastrous. And it is highly unlikely that zero tolerance will be attempted in the disadvantaged, run-down, outlying estates where additional — albeit sensitive — policing is most needed.

Zero tolerance is all about sweeping clean those inner city junctions where tourists and professional commuters briefly encounter the dispossessed underclass — the mad and the sad, as well as the bad: not so much dangerous as socially uncomfortable.

All the talk about zero tolerance comes ironically at a time when, operationally, it is less likely to occur than at any point in recent policing history. In that sense, it distracts from the real dilemmas confronting the police. It is not so much a question of whether the police should or should not display a public presence so as to prevent the incivilities about which the public are undoubtedly concerned, but rather a question of how the police can continue to provide patrols given the other, equally demanding, calls on their limited and expensive resources. This is the real issue and it demands more radical attention than either the Government or the Opposition has so far been prepared to devote to it.

The reality is that the police in Britain have been the beneficiaries of considerable real increases in spending since 1979 and cannot expect any significant further increase in resources from the next government, whatever its political complexion. Pressure on the police to tackle serious crime grows, which means their adopting more intelligence-led methods.

Yet public demand for a visible, uniformed presence on the streets remains insatiable, and the legitimacy of the police service — on which hangs public trust — depends crucially on satisfying that reasonable demand. The time has come to mount experiments with a dedicated patrol rank within the police service and establishing partnership arrangements between the police and commercial security and other "policing" providers, both voluntary and paid.

It is doubtful whether the sort of uniformed patrols that the public find reassuring can or should be provided by the fully-fledged young constables whose impatient sights are set on careers in the CID. There are other models that need to be looked at, tried, and evaluated in consultation with local people. Councils such as those in Sedgefield, Wandsworth and the Wirral now provide patrol services in parks and on local streets.

The model in Sedgefield — Labour leader Tony Blair's constituency in County Durham — and the Wirral is straightforward to implement. Officers in the Sedgefield Community Force and the Wirral Community Patrol are employees of their local councils. They wear uniforms more like those of security guards than police officers, and they patrol the streets and other public spaces around the clock.

The aim is to increase public safety and reassurance. Officers have no legal powers other than those of the ordinary citizen. They act as the trained "eyes and ears" of the police.

Although it is early days for the Wirral Patrol, the Sedgefield Force has been in operation for three years, and the evidence suggests that the force is respected and valued by the local community.

All local authorities in England and Wales can swear in park employees as special constables. Separate legislation which enables London boroughs to do the same to enforce bylaws relating to parks and open spaces has been used by several London councils, including Kensington and Chelsea, Greenwich, Barking and Dagenham and, notably, Wandsworth since 1985.

More such experiments are on the way, and they deserve to be encouraged and nurtured. Local authorities might also consider two Dutch initiatives: the *stadswacht* and the *politiesurveillant*. The former are city wardens — that is, citizens in uniform, without power of arrest — who assist in preventing crime and controlling nuisance behaviour. The latter are police patrol auxiliaries, along the lines of paid Special Constabulary. The evidence from the Netherlands suggests that both can be popular and effective.

IN THE same way that the growing burden of traffic policing prompted the introduction of the traffic warden and, more recently, contracting out the regulation of parking, so there needs to be more incisive thought about how the police and local government can most cost-effectively deliver the range of policing services the public in Britain want and need.

The crucial lesson of policing during the past 10 years has been that the key to any success the police may have is public support and trust. Zero tolerance policing, let us be clear, code for aggressiveness and intolerance. In the end, it will undermine public confidence in the police. Thankfully, most chief constables recognise this. It is an ironic sign of the times, however, that we may have to look to them to protect us from the increasingly punitive policies proposed by a potential Labour Prime Minister and Home Secretary.

Rod Morgan is Professor of Criminal Justice at the University of Bristol; Tim Newburn is Head of Crime, Justice and Youth Studies at the Policy Studies Institute. Their book, The Future of the Police, is available from OUP at £9.99

# Where corruption is a way of life

Democracy in Pakistan cannot flourish until graft is rooted out, argues **Suzanne Goldenberg**

AS THE results trickled in from last week's Pakistan elections — the fourth in eight years — it became clear that Nawaz Sharif had secured a victory of historic proportions.

But his apparent strength is illusory. During the past 50 years, no government has survived its full term in Pakistan, and a popular mandate has provided no guarantee against constitutional powers that allow presidents to throw out elected governments. And in Pakistan, as Mr Sharif knows, there is always a ready excuse: corruption. The Punjabi businessman was himself sacked as prime minister in 1993 after being accused of extravagance and taking kick-backs in the import of thousands of yellow taxi cabs for a self-employment scheme.

Nowadays, there is public outrage at the scale of corruption in Pakistan as never before. But the indignation of the middle classes at the profligacy of their political rulers overlooks a single crucial fact: corruption has become a way of life in Pakistan, and anyone with a stake in the economy is a part of it. In the past three months, the Pakistani press has been replete with instances of the alleged corruption of the sacked prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, and her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, slobbering over accounts — helpfully provided by the so-called neutral caretaker administration — of their alleged $60 million annual bill for mineral water, the polo ponies that breakfasted on marmalade in air-conditioned stables, and massive over-due telephone bills at the prime-ministerial residence.

There can be no excuse for such shenanigans, but first they must be proven to be true. The caretaker government has yet to provide documentation for its charges that a staggering $1.5 billion was spirited out of the country during Bhutto's three years in office. Aside from the air-freight bills for the shipment of furnishings to the couple's Surrey mansion — whose ownership Bhutto denies — there is no paper trail of their alleged larceny.

In part, the failure of the authorities to document an alleged theft on a massive scale is due to the reluctance of investigating agencies. "The real reason why politicians get away is that the people investigating them are also tainted," says Arif Nizami, editor of The Nation, a daily newspaper. "If the figure of $1.5 billion looted is true, then there was a lot of money to give away to the investigative agencies."

The recently established accountability commission has appealed to bureaucrats to inform on their political masters. But many of the deals that were allegedly done in Bhutto's name were crafted by senior civil servants who undoubtedly helped themselves to a share of the proceeds.

The focus on the first couple's corruption also ignores the fact that even those outside the political élite have been helping themselves to public funds for years. In the capital, Islamabad, the fruits of ill-gotten wealth have been visible for years in palatial homes where owners maintain a fairy-tale lifestyle surrounded by an army of servants, fleets of luxury cars, and menageries including peacocks and deer.

In Pakistan, as in neighbouring India, few transactions are as they seem. Nearly everyone has a business on the side: the policeman who supplements a measly salary with on-the-spot fines, the schoolteacher who plays truant to give lucrative private tuition, the doctor who demands an entrance fee at the hospital, the airline reservation clerk who can produce a seat on a full flight for the privileged few by chucking off an ordinary passenger.

While the middle class may lament the morals of their politicians, it is they who are prepared to pay that little bit extra to smooth their way through bloated bureaucracies, and who number among the 99 per cent of Pakistanis who pay no tax.

It is also unclear what defines corruption. In the public mind, corruption is indelibly associated with elected governments, and this is tragic. But corruption did not begin with the restoration of democracy in 1988. It was there during the martial-law era; and unless the middle class is prepared to examine its own stake in the system, it is there to stay.





# Still slaves to the Cape grape

Little has changed in South Africa's vineyards since apartheid ruled, writes **Ruaridh Nicoll**

AT A FARM outside the vineyard town of Bonnievale, in South Africa's Western Cape, workers line up each evening to receive *dop*, part-payment for their labour in the fields. They hang around the door of an outbuilding and wait as each half-litre plastic carton is filled with wine — the same wine that is sold in British supermarkets — with which they ease the pain of their days.

"After working all day long the *dop* takes the tiredness away," says Stefan Moses, a toothless man born on the soil that lies under his feet. "If they stop giving us the *dop*, then they will not give us the money instead."

Filthy from hard labour, the men start to make their way home, passing among the rows of grapes that colour the bottom of the valley green. They suck in the wine as, to the east, the sun settles on the Olifantsberg peak. The workers are Cape Coloured and the farmer, sitting in his truck watching, is white. "It's bad — they don't know how to use wine," he says, starting up the vehicle. "We want to get rid of the *dop* system, but they won't let us."

Last week President Nelson Mandela opened the third session of South Africa's democratic parliament — just two hours' drive away — while in the winelands many of the old feudal attitudes prevail. Free wine at the end of the day is designed to keep the workers hooked, and it works.

"Alcoholism is a terrible problem here," says a missionary who ministers to the workers. The farmer pays his men between 100 and 150 rand ($22-$33) a week, but admits that many of the labourers buy drink with the money, a system he helps to perpetuate.

The farmer, who is in the middle of a distribution deal with a British wine merchant, asked that his farm remain nameless and, given his mother's trenchant opinions, the request was a wise one. She and her husband have moved into town from the farm after years of working it. She refers to South Africa's move to majority rule as "the capitulation" and argues that black is black and white is white "and ne'er the twain will meet". She falls silent only to join hands with her husband and pray before the midday meal.

During lunch she rails against what she calls the "venom" that two of South Africa's most prominent wine critics, John and Erica Platter, let loose on a BBC food programme to condemn Cape wine-makers for failure to move with the times.

The farmer's mother said: "How could they say these things when we are all trying to live together in the new South Africa?" There is living together and living together. Later, as we tour the local township of Happy Valley in her Mercedes, she complains that the Coloureds are becoming too familiar.

The *dop* system and the alcoholism it fosters is just part of the legacy the wine-makers are battling with. The first vines arrived in Cape Town on a ship called the Leeuwin in 1655 after a settler, Jan van Riebeeck, realised the climate was similar to that of Spain. Since then, no one can remember a time when anyone with off-white skin held a senior job on a wine farm — let alone owned one.

Outside South Africa's wine capital of Stellenbosch, in the glorious gardens of the Spier Estate, Jabulani Ntshangase sits under the white-painted slave bell and sips at a 1989 Val de Lyn, a beautiful red wine. "On the surface, the vineyard owners seem like nice people, but on the record of what they've done for blacks they must be pretty bad," he says.

Mr Ntshangase is one of only two black people who hold senior positions in the wine business; the other is a young wine-maker called Carmen Stevens.

"The vineyard owners have chosen people to work for them who will not speak against the system, who will not criticise," said Mr Ntshangase. "You literally have slave-labour, people who are stuck on these farms. If you say 'go', they say, 'Sounds good, but where to?'"

The eloquent and relaxed Mr Ntshangase says he is trying to inject balance — the quality he looks for in wine — into the trade by training black youths from the shop floor up. He has managed to enrol five students at the famously conservative University of Stellenbosch on a four-year course in wine-making. He has found the money to finance three of his students, but the remaining two will be excluded, for want of $5,000 each.

Meanwhile the association governing South African wine-makers, KWV, is trying to privatise itself to protect assets valued at between 2 billion and 5 billion rand for its 4,751 white members. "Ten million rand would transform this industry," said Mr Ntshangase. "There is nothing wrong with privatisation, but there should be an accounting exercise to see what assets were accumulated on the back of engaging prison labour at 40c [US 9 cents] a day."

Back in Bonnievale, a new South African flag hangs over the vineyard belonging to Lourens Jonker, the chairman of KWV. Mr Ntshangase does not expect to see a penny from people like Jonker. "KWV is a racist institution; the top management has no desire to develop the industry," he said.

Another farmer — the original's brother — stands on a ridge and scans the aptly named Bonnievale valley. Above the canals that bring water around either side of the valley, the scrub desert moves back in. Below, the lushness drips with fruit. This place is a man-made garden of Eden built in the desert by pioneers using slave labour. "You're not a Boer hater are you?" he asks.

The farmers are slow-moving people, deeply religious and unyielding to outside pressure. But the younger farmers have begun a slow process. They are trying to ban the *dop* system and are letting workers organise and form unions. But even the small changes worry them. The farmer's brother talks about the technology — which drinks only diesel — that would make the workers obsolete.

"I don't think it's moral to bring in harvesters to a place like South Africa, where we have no shortage of labour," he says. "But we are very close to doing it."

For Mr Ntshangase this is the wrong answer. "South Africans always ask what will happen when Mandela dies, and I always say the amount of work we have all done to close the gap between black and white by the time he dies will decide what will happen."



Workers harvesting grapes in South Africa: many receive wine in place of a wage PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID LURIE



Margaret O'Brien: full of regrets PHOTOGRAPH: GARY CALTON

**Barry Hugill** on a professor who found her views on working women distorted by a television report

# A mother's lament

MARGARET O'BRIEN has a photograph of her two young children behind her desk at the University of North London. Both are under five and, if the papers are to be believed, will probably do badly at school. She reads the Guardian, which reported last week: "Working mums blamed — study says schooling suffers when both parents have jobs".

Like every other British newspaper, it was picking up on a press release from BBC's Panorama claiming that children whose mothers work full-time are twice as likely to fail their exams as those with mothers working part-time.

The claim was based on research by Professor O'Brien. All week her phone rang as journalists sought interviews with the woman prepared to stand up for old-fashioned family values and admit that a woman's place really is in the home. But they were phoning the wrong woman — she believes no such thing.

She is a youthful 43 but by the end of last week confessed to feeling twice that age. "It's been a terrible week. I'm still shocked." Shocked because she's been portrayed as the scourge of working mothers when she's the very opposite. It is true she has spent the past three years studying families in Barking and Dagenham, an east London suburb. It is true she has discovered differences in educational performance between children whose mothers work and those who do not. A marked difference in fact — children with stay-at-home mums tend to do badly. She also found that the best performing children came from homes where the mother worked part-time.

The professor now regrets having agreed to appear on the programme: "I have spent all week trying to make sense of what happened. The problems obviously started with the press release which was misleading. I didn't know until Sunday that the programme was to be all about mothers. They came to see me about the role of fathers. We talked about many issues and filmed over two days. I'm concerned about the impact of long hours at work on parents and talked about things like the Social Chapter, day-care provision and after-school facilities."

She talked about these things but not to camera. So the 5 million Panorama viewers did not hear her plea for Europe's Social Chapter and statutory paternity leave, nor her passionate support for legal limits on the hours people work. What they saw was a hesitant woman being pushed to say that working mothers should give up their jobs.

She resisted. "They apologised for pushing me but obviously that was the answer they wanted. Of course I don't believe that. I'm a working mother. We can't possibly go back on the enormous gains made for women."

At this point, she paused and shook her head. "This is really hard, and I'm finding it difficult. I don't want to attack Panorama. I liked the reporters. I now realise that academics and programme-makers have totally different aims. We [academics] can't take an angle, but they must. Now I realise what the angle was. I suppose I was very naïve."

Her naïvety was to believe that journalists would spoil a good story by placing it in context. Panorama used a very specific piece of research to make broad generalisations. On the basis of a few hundred families in Dagenham and Barking it scared the wits out of thousands of working mothers who went to bed after the programme worrying they were harming their children.

But she has never claimed that what happens in that small part of east London mirrors what happens throughout the rest of Britain: "Barking and Dagenham is a very special area because of its long history of educational underachievement, especially boys. It's a poor area, very white, with many fathers in manual jobs. I wouldn't generalise from my sample for anywhere else. In better-off areas I would expect very different results."

There is one generalisation she will make: "Whether we like it or not, mothers still carry the main responsibility for child care. We have all the guilt and anxiety. I don't think men who work full-time feel that guilt. Panorama, for all its faults, was trying to highlight an important social point — how do we balance work and family time?"

The irony is that Prof O'Brien is known by fellow social scientists as an expert on fathers. For as long as she has been an academic she has been arguing that more attention needs to be placed on their role. In fact, her study has thrown up a fascinating fact totally ignored in all the furore over working mums.

She discovered that sole-earner fathers in traditional families were less available at weekends than other working fathers. That means that when mothers go out to work, fathers compensate by spending more time with kids at the weekend.

Put a bit of spin on that and you could end up with a great TV programme. But not the one Panorama wanted to make. — *The Observer*

# Puppet pulling the strings

THEATRE
**Michael Billington**

*THE* American ventriloquist David Strassman, in his new London show at the Apollo Theatre, begins by inviting us to his "weird and wacky show". Technically brilliant and inventive it certainly is; but, strangely enough, the sheer element of showbiz skill and animatronic sophistication makes it seem less weird than the kind of downmarket vent acts one used to see in tacky music halls.

Dummies have always cheeked their operators. But Strassman's best notion is the invention of a foul-mouthed anarchist puppet, Chuck Wood, who insults the audience, vomits over the stage and threatens to run amok in the stalls stabbing people. "Do you know what we do to naughty boys?" he is asked. "Give them money," is his pert reply.

The joke is, of course, that Strassman is always in control; yet, such is his skill, we almost start to believe that Chuck has a life of his own. And Strassman furthers the illusion by bringing on a soft, and somewhat dim-witted, teddy bear whose gentle spirit and Eccles-like mental slowness are the butt of endless ruderies from the now discarded Chuck.

The essence of ventriloquism lies in the tension between dummy and master and in the feeling that the puppet may finally achieve independence: it is the source of the horror of Cavalcanti's film, Dead Of Night, and it virtually happens when Strassman walks off stage and leaves Chuck to do the show on his own.

But, although Chuck is a great invention and we also encounter a baby dummy who wants to know all about sex and a green-eyed alien called Kevin who eats pizza, I found the show's fascination began to wear off amid more and more special effects. We get flashing lights, an intrusive robot and even a trio of singing dinosaurs. But, when anything is technically possible, everything is slightly less interesting.

For all the variations Strassman plays on his basic theme, I am not convinced that an evening of undiluted ventriloquism is a good idea. What used to be speciality acts are now asked to occupy a couple of hours. Just as stand-up comedy is slowly being strangled by interminable monologuists, there is a danger that things like puppetry and magic are being over-exposed. Why doesn't some genius reinvent the idea of Variety?

At 20 minutes Strassman would be sensational; over the course of an evening he begins to seem like too much of a good thing. But this is not to deny that technically he is as good as any ventriloquist I have seen. And he also takes risks, such as asking the audience to shout out questions. "What's the worst thing about my mother-in-law?" asks some smart alec. "Her son-in-law," replies Chuck. "Did O J do it?" asks someone else, to which the answer is "Yes and No". At such moments Chuck takes on a human reality that is genuinely unnerving.

*AUDIENCE* coughing, says Harold Pinter, is an act of aggression. But, after being greeted by one of the most bad-mannered bronchial barrages I have ever heard in any theatre, Roger Michell's revival of **The Homecoming** at the National's Lyttelton Theatre finally reduced the audience to pin-drop silence; which says something for the power of this extraordinary play and the quality of the production.

Michell's version differs in several key ways from Peter Hall's legendary original, most particularly in the domestic realism of William Dudley's design. For once we see, through translucent walls, every room in the cavernous north London home to which Teddy returns, en route back to American academia, with his wife Ruth. We actually hear the night-time snores of the dozing family predators and we later see Uncle Sam pottering about in the kitchen and grating on the nerves of his brother Max.

But Michell's most original stroke lies in his interpretation of Ruth, who famously opts to stay with the family and, possibly, work as a prostitute. Is she exploited victim or arch-manipulator? In Lindsay Duncan's magnetic performance, you certainly feel Ruth has the men in the play under her control.

But Duncan gives you the impression that Ruth is not so much executing a master-plan as undergoing a voyage of self-discovery. Above all, Duncan implies that Ruth is nursing some secret sadness and is possibly recovering from a breakdown. She eventually discovers, as she cradles the heads of Joey and Max, temporary salvation and peace.

But, even if this version lays stress on Ruth's redemption, it does full justice to Pinter's brutal comedy. There is a stunning performance as Max from David Bradley, who plays him as a scraggy bullying patriarch who can turn in a split-second from dreamy nostalgia to bilious rage. And, even if I have seen more insufferably patronising Teddys than Keith Allen, this is still a gripping evening that reminds you that Pinter's play operates on any number of levels: as realistic drama, family comedy and mythical study of female empowerment. It is done here with a savage skill that finally puts the nails in the coughing.

# Classical proportions

CONCERT
**Andrew Clements**

**THE Wigmore Hall's audience is the most knowledgeable and steadfast in London, so it was no surprise to find the sold-out notices posted well in advance of the Quatuor Mosaïques's recent Beethoven recital. There may be plenty of good, super-efficient string quartets on the international circuit, but there are few truly exceptional ones, and the Mosaïques (three-quarters Austrian, despite their name and affiliation to a French record label) unquestionably belong to that select company.**

**That they are a period instrument group has become less important as their stature has grown: it's the outstanding quality of their performances, their insights and unerring sense of style that have established their reputation, and whether they play on gut strings or metal, with sparing vibrato or lashings of it, hardly seems to matter when the playing is so superlative.**

**Haydn and Mozart were the starting points for Mosaïques's success, but Beethoven has gradually bulked larger in their programmes. This was the sixth in their London Beethoven series, and combined early, middle and late quartets, the A major Op 18 no 5 and the E minor Rasumovsky Op 59 no 2 sandwiching the Grosse Fuge Op 133.**

**It is not just the lean, pliable sound of the ensemble that gives their Beethoven such satisfying classical proportions. There is a detachment about the playing that mistrusts emotional excess or loss of expressive control, but still never produces arid, intellectualised results. So the Grosse Fuge, which explodes conventional notions of what writing for string quartets in the 1820s could encompass, had an elegance and poise in even the most strenuous passages.**

**In the early A major work the same careful balancing of proportions buoyed up the performance, with Christophe Coin's wonderfully firm yet never overstated cello playing providing the foundation and the leader Erich Höbarth's silvery neatness adding the decorative surface. The statement of the theme in the slow movement, rapt and purged of vibrato, seemed like music out of time. The variations gradually moulded this into classical sensibility, while the finale danced effortlessly, with a serene lightness of touch and an exquisite interplay of the thematic ideas.**

**The sense that the music is being presented without interpretative glosses is the Mosaïques's hallmark; in one sense it is an aural illusion, for they attend to every phrase in minute detail, yet never allow what they discover to come between the music and the audience. So the way in which the first movement of the second Rasumovsky was unfolded seemed as natural as breathing, but every detail was perfectly finished. Playing of that kind of altruistic respect is rare in itself.**

# Walpole's delight

The first prime minister of Britain had taste when it came to choosing art, writes **Maev Kennedy**

*GOSSIPY*, witty little Horace Walpole was very cross: it was April 1743, and again he had been summoned to chilly East Anglia by his formidable father. "I can't help wishing that I had never known a Guido from a Teniers," he wrote to his friend Horace Mann, "but who could ever suspect any connection between painting and the wilds of Norfolk?" Who could ever suspect any connection between painting, the wilds of Norfolk, and Catherine the Great of Russia? Or between a Norwich museum curator and one of the greatest galleries in the world, the Hermitage in St Petersburg?

The connection is laid bare in an exhibition at Kenwood House in north London. Several magnificent paintings have been loaned by the Hermitage, and are back in Britain for the first time since 1779, when Catherine picked the best of a collection made by the first British prime minister, Robert Walpole, for just over £40,000.

Andrew Moore is the curator from Norfolk who found himself trotting around the acres of the Hermitage, peering at pictures and saying, "That's mine; that's not; that's a possible," while telling the Russians about the palace Prime Minister Walpole built himself at Houghton, and where Norfolk was, and about his own castle, the Castle Museum in Norwich.

"Not surprisingly, they had never heard of us. It did require one to make a bit of a leap of faith to be very, very convinced that this exhibition was actually going to happen." Moore started trying to track down the Walpole paintings when the Soviet Union was on its last legs. He met the director of the Hermitage as the Berlin Wall was crumbling, at an exhibition in Dijon to which the Hermitage had contributed paintings and Moore a catalogue essay.

At that stage, Moore knew considerably more about the works than the Hermitage did. Catherine valued them highly — she wrote gleefully: "Your humble servant has already got her claws on them, and will no more let them go than a cat would a mouse." But she seems to have split them up almost immediately, and they are not catalogued in Russia as coming from Houghton. Some are still in the Hermitage, which Catherine built; some were lost in war; some are scattered around other Russian museums; and some have been sold. Moore is still trying to track some of the 181 paintings.

Once the Hermitage staff found Norfolk on the globe, they lent the pieces Moore particularly wanted, including Maratti's magnificent portrait of the dying Pope Clement IX, and a vast Poussin for which Walpole paid £400 at a time when he was buying Van Dycks at £50 to £100 apiece. Then he had to go to Washington to beg for more Walpole paintings. Russia, desperate for hard cash, had sold them off in the late twenties.

Moore has been mounting exhibitions at Norwich based on the county's country-house treasures for more than 10 years. Gradually he realised he was compiling a doughnut: the hole in the middle was Houghton. "It wasn't so much a question of keeping up with the neighbours in early 18th century Norfolk," he says. "The only thing that counted was keeping up with Walpole." The exhibition (until April 20), and the accompanying book, are designed as a tour through the splendours of the house. Moore also contributed a number of handy hints. In each gallery, along with the priceless paintings, there are useful tips that vividly convey the social context of high art: how to kill rats, clean marble and velvet (Walpole bought more than 1,000 yards of green velvet alone), deal with fleas under beds . . .

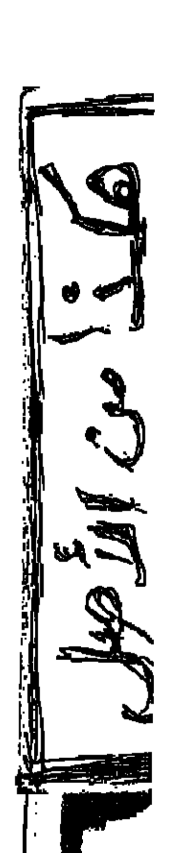


Pope on a rope . . . hanging Maratti's portrait of Clement IX

One of the cleverest men in the country, Robert Walpole spent his political career dogged by stupider men trying to work out where he got his money. He was sent to the Tower for suspected sleaze, and got into a habit of concealing his traces, burning bills, letters and receipts. Moore has rounded up a posse of experts to contribute to his opulent book of the exhibition, but they haven't been able to calculate what on earth it all cost. The exhibition covers, but cannot really convey, the desolation of the end of it all.

Robert Walpole jumped from parliament before he was pushed. His beautiful, rich and unloved wife died, and he married his cherished mistress of 20 years, only to see her die in childbirth within a year. His health disintegrated, and in one day he passed 35 kidney stones — they were solemnly engraved and are in the exhibition, excruciating to behold. He died with massive debts.

The seventh Marquess contributes Horace Walpole's description of his father, soon before his death, sitting alone in his sumptuous library, head in hands, weeping because he could not find a book to distract his anguished mind.







Sweet nothings . . . Bernard Giraudeau and Fanny Ardant in Patrice Laconte's Ridicule

# France's flattering classes

CINEMA
**Derek Malcolm**

*NOMINATED* for 12 Césars — the French national Oscars — Patrice Leconte's **Ridicule** has proved as potent a box-office attraction as most of the British period pieces with which we are so familiar. And that's a triumph, since subtitled films can go only so far in the American market.

The film is not such an artistic success as Jean-Paul Rappeneau's Cyrano de Bergerac in 1991. But it is made with the same intelligent flamboyance and, though set in the corrupt and decadent peacock court of Louis XVI, manages to be both a metaphor for modern society and a semi-historical allegory.

The central character is Charles Berling's Ponceludon de Malavoy, scion of an old provincial noble family that has fallen on hard times. He presides now over an estate that's crumbling and marshlands that desperately need ridding of swamp fever. The only way he can get something done is to petition the king. This means visiting a court he loathes and being more flattering and wittier than everyone else. The revolution may be just around the corner, but the chess game still has to be played.

Leconte illustrates the nature of the court early on when a young Chevalier craves an audience with a gaga old courtier who has ruined his chances with a cruel witticism. He pees over the old man, who dies of shock. Unfortunately, the veteran was our hero's protector, but he is taken under the wing of Jean Rochefort's Marquis and, though laughed at initially for his country airs, wins a contest of rhymed verse with Bernard Giraudeau's Abbe de Vilecourt.

After discovering an intrigue between Vilecourt and Fanny Ardant's Comtesse de Blayac, he is further advanced at court by being seduced by her in return for silence.

His true nature, however, is at odds with the intrigue, and he falls in love with the Comtesse, thus endangering his romance with Judith Godreche's pure Mathilde. An innocent man is everywhere compromised.

The film, beautifully shot and designed by Thierry Arbogast and Ivan Maussion respectively, balances on a knife edge between the florid fun of Remi Waterhouse's dialogue and the more serious point that, human nature being what it is, the new France might well end up a pale reflection of the old.

Ridicule doesn't always work. The love story never quite holds amid the plethora of plot turns and warfare. It is also practically impossible to do justice to the language with subtitles.

Still, the film works largely because of Leconte's baleful, entertaining orchestration, not only of Versailles but of one man's struggle to maintain his better nature against the seductive power of court intrigue. Although he badly wants to bed Madame de Blayac and convinces himself it will be done simply to better the lives of his impoverished peasants back home, he tempers his lust with the guilt of a weak man petitioning the strong.

This is a world where there is nothing more dramatic than appearances and nothing worse than the ridicule of those who sense that you have got it wrong. As such, it has more connection with Leconte's Monsieur Hire and The Hairdresser's Husband, his most successful films in Britain, than the popular comedies with which he regales the French on other occasions.

This will be good news for his supporters here, who regard him affectionately as one of the few French film-makers who doesn't want to escape the Gallic tag.

Al Pacino's first directorial effort, **Looking for Richard**, is a freeform documentary treatise on the meaning and relevance of Shakespeare and, in particular, Richard III, and proves to be an intelligent encouragement for cinema-goers who find the Bard a bore.

Pacino asks passers-by in the street what they think of Shakespeare, goes to the experts for their opinions (Gielgud, Jacobi, Branagh and Vanessa Redgrave among them) and mounts a production in which he plays Richard III.

Where Ian McKellen's contemporary version tried to persuade us that the play was a political thriller, Pacino goes full tilt for a sweatily realistic costume melodrama. The excerpts are often stunning. He is a very good Richard, and Kevin Spacey, Winona Ryder, Alec Baldwin and other more orthodox Shakespearean performers show that, though Americans may be frightened of Shakespeare, both as performers and audiences, there's not much need for them to be.

Though Pacino's demystification of the play may strike some as naive, and bits of the humour appear a trifle patronising, there is no doubt that the film works. It tells us Shakespeare is still capable of astonishing us, and performs the play with passion and insight.

If some of those who appear in mundane Hollywood productions are capable of work like this (Baldwin, for example), they must be going nuts at the insult to their powers of expression supplied by lesser "screenwriters".

# Beware the yellow peril from Prague

TELEVISION
**Nancy Banks Smith**

*MY EYELIDS* seemed to be glued together with tears. **Brass Eye** (Channel 4) was showing celebrities vast, virulently yellow pills, claiming they were a new killer drug from Czechoslovakia called cake. They looked like monstrous bath sponges or, of course, Victoria sponges.

When Neville Chamberlain called Czechslovakia a far away country of which we know nothing, he got it in one. Everyone was eager to warn the nation's youth about the Prague pill and parroted the increasingly lunatic information that was fed them.

As Sir Bernard Ingham said, all too aptly, "This is a piece of cake."

"We all like to party, right? Absolutely!" said Bruno Brookes, gold discs glittering behind him. "But only a fool would say 'Yeah, I'll enter the nightmare of cake.' "

Various reasons were advanced for cake's fatal effect. Rolf Harris understood that water was retained: "Causing something called Czech neck. The neck engulfs the mouth and nose so the person on this trip cannot breathe at all."

Bernard Manning, wearing a shirt made from several deck chairs, thought water was lost: "One young laddie on cake cried all the water out of his body. Just imagine how his mother felt!"

Noel Edmonds went into it more scientifically. "It stimulates the part of the brain called Shaftner's Bassoon, that's the bit that deals with time perception. A second feels like a month. It sounds almost like fun unless you're the Prague schoolboy who walked out into the street straight in front of a tram. He thought he'd got a month to cross the street."

"Just think about it," said Noel, thinking about it. "As his skull was crushed that second probably felt like a fortnight."

Jimmy Greaves urged cake trippers to beware of cows: "Thirteen teenagers were trampled to death in a cowfield at midnight taking this stuff."

And Ingham warned of falling saucepans. "Several people have already been brained by saucepans, used to make this kind of cake, thrown out of tower blocks." He tapped his head significantly. "Use your cheese box. Say no!"

Sir Graham Bright MP was cruelly chosen for his name. "If you're offered cake, just don't take it," said Bright, whose straining suit suggested he had never refused a slice in his life. "Cake is a made up thing. It's made in a kitchen."

David Amess MP, once he was reassured that cake's street name, Basildon doughnut, was rhyming slang and nothing to do with his constituency, denounced it as foreign muck. "Cake is a bistrubile cranabolic amphetamoid. It comes from Prague with its own culture of boom raves." He raised the matter in the Commons, and the Leader of the House, Tony Newton, assured him that a ministerial committee would look into cake carefully.

How much sympathy the celebrities, who talked such fluent drivel, deserve is a matter of opinion. You could say that their hearts were in the right place. God knows where they had left their heads.

Opposite Brass Eye, was Lynda La Plante's undercover drug squad drama, **Supply and Demand** (ITV). The one subtle element in this crack, bang, wallop thriller was an Eliza Doolittle make-over in reverse. Inspector Harrington was black, highly educated, teetotal, non-smoking. He could have given Trevor McDonald elocution lessons. To go undercover, he was given Rasta dreadlocks, learned Yardie slang and swagger ("Anybody dis you, dem dead!") He became Willie Boy and the street opened and swallowed him up.

Cries of "Bollocks!" "He's a frigging nutter", "You gotta problem?" That kind of script and some good stunts.

There was a vivid performance from Eamonn Walker (entertainingly described as being kicked out of every karate club) and an acting debut for Freddie Starr as a gangland boss. All stand-up comics make good gangsters. Billy Connolly was good and Mel Smith was superb. Like Brass Eye, good comedy is quite ruthless.

# Life after the Park

POP CD OF THE WEEK
**Caroline Sullivan**

**HAS the newly slackerised Damon Albarn given Pavement a cut of the royalties on Food, the new Blur album? We should be told, because Albarn has credited the American lo-fi mongers with the inspiration for Blur's fifth release.**

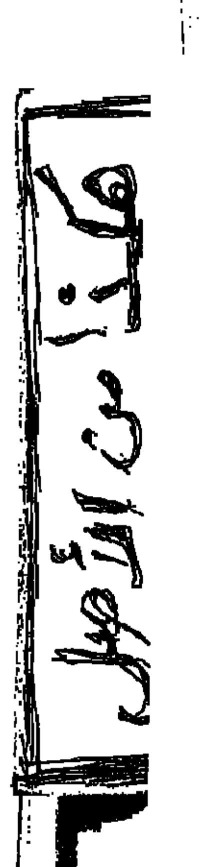
**Long adored by critics for effortlessly veering from silky tunefulness to crazed avant-garde rock-outs, Pavement's new album should secure them commercial success with the usual glowing reviews. So how have they influenced Blur? Using leftfield American rock as a template disengages them from Britpop, and from the spat with Oasis, which Noel Gallagher seems keen to continue (Albarn sighs: "They're so anti-us, probably because being top dog instills a profound insecurity."). But most importantly, it's enabled them to make the record they say they always had in them. Their first two albums bear this out; had they not been waylaid by Britpop via the smash Parklife album, they might have got around to acting on their arty impulses much earlier.**

**Surprisingly, their fans seem to approve the radical transition from kings of the glottal stop to anoraky indie kids. Beetlebum (the most commercial track on Food, with its echoes of John Lennon and The White Album) debuted at number one, which Albarn apparently expected: "It's self-evident that the public don't take a blind bit of notice what the press say." But the public have yet to savour the more challenging tracks. Take Song 2, a grunge-flavoured moment of madness with Albarn whooping like a cartoon cowboy. It's jerked along by guitarist Graham Coxon at his most scabrous. Or take the downbeat Country Sad Ballad Man, whose first verse is something like "Yeah, I found nowhere, wanna sleep all day." Take THAT and party, 14-year-old Blur fans.**

**Among the striking things about Blur-the-album, along with Coxon's promotion to a starring role is the lack of Parklife/Great Escape-esque song-characters. "I'm saving my characters for TV films and musicals," Albarn claims whimsically. "The new songs are just about a return to clarity and a release from a whole load of shit."**

**The hybrid Albarn and company have cooked up is more self-conscious than the real American item, but is still a testament to what can be achieved if you're literate and comfortable with ideas. "Bands like Pavement's background and attitude is closer to ours than British bands. They're slightly over-educated, quite at home with discussion and they're just middle-class. I was never uncomfortable with my middle-classness," Albarn swears.**

**"Britpop helped us get where we are now because we were forced to seek out our true contemporaries rather than convenient bedfellows." They've done it rather well.**





There is no purer definition of birdsong than the skylark's (above left). The grey partridge (above right) is most often seen in a convoy, and the tree sparrow (right) is more graceful than the common sparrow

# Tree sparrows under threat

**Martin Wainwright**

**BRITAIN'S humblest songbird, along with other once-common birds, is facing devastation from agro-chemicals, according to a new report.**

**A survey commissioned by six countryside groups, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, has found the tree sparrow to be uncomfortably close to facing the Last Tweet. Numbers of the small chestnut bird collapsed by 89 per cent between 1969 and 1994, according to the British Trust for Ornithology. The grey partridge is down by 82 per cent and the skylark by 58 per cent.**

**The decline in birds whose abundance has never before been questioned triggered the inquiry by the Government's joint nature conservation committee, which will publish the findings later this month. Ornithologists contributing to the document blame the use of insecticides and weedkiller sprays for destroying the food chain upon which the birds depend.**

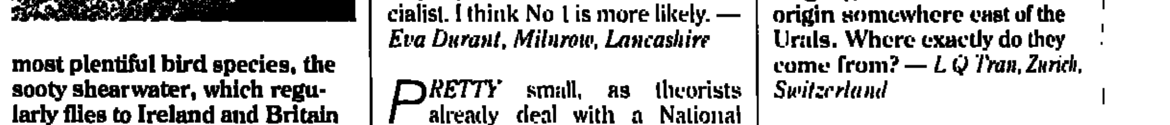
**Insecticide dosing of farmland rose from 5 per cent of crop in 1970 to 90 per cent in 1990. In the same period herbicide use rose from an average 1.3 sprayings of a field annually to 2.5.**

**"These birds are still spread over wide areas but are becoming thin on the ground," said RSPB researcher Andy Evans, who helped to draw up the report. He and colleagues from English Nature, the Game Conservancy and the RSPB also blame the decline on the loss of hedges — ideal for shelter and nesting — and a shift from spring to autumn tilling, which leaves less cover in winter.**

**Recommendations to the conservation committee include a return to spring tilling, and an arable incentive scheme of enhanced grants to allow tangled retreats for vulnerable species to be left alone.**

**Global warming was being blamed last week for the devastation of another of the world's most plentiful bird species, the sooty shearwater, which regularly flies to Ireland and Britain from habitats in California, South America and Australia. US scientists say that warmer seas have reduced the plankton that forms its staple diet.**

**The findings suggest that 4 million shearwaters vanished between 1987 and 1994. Dick Viet of Washington state university said: "This may be the first real evidence for a major natural change as a result of global warning."**





## Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

***WHAT* is it about the flat-topped peaked hat that confers an air of officialdom?**

*I DON'T* know, but the yellow band round traffic wardens' hats is there to stop people parking on their heads. — *Peter Nicklin, Newcastle upon Tyne*

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***WHAT* happens to caffeine from decaffeinated coffee?**

*WE WERE* told at a Costa Rican plantation that their coffee beans were sent to Hamburg to have the caffeine steamed out, and that it was then sold to Coca-Cola. — *Gill Porter, Birkenhead, Merseyside*

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***WHAT* is the effect on political theory if a democratic socialist party becomes more rightwing than a liberal democratic party?**

*NOTHING*, but it can be one of two things: the democratic socialist party is not democratic and is not socialist; or the liberal democratic party has become democratic socialist. I think No 1 is more likely. — *Eva Durant, Milnrow, Lancashire*

*PRETTY* small, as theorists already deal with a National Socialist party which was more right-wing than anyone. — *Anne Bryson, West Kirby, Liverpool*

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***CAN I* stop a newspaper photograph, about 10 years old, from deteriorating?**

*EITHER* you could de-acidify it (complicated) and then encapsulate between sheets of acid-free plastic (Melinex or Mylar); or, simpler, photocopy it on to acid-free paper and encapsulate it as above; better still, but more expensive, buy a print from the newspaper concerned and then encapsulate it.

You could laminate it but be sure that the plastic sheets are acid-free and, remember, the process is irreversible. — *Robin Griffin (archivist), Mount Eden, Auckland, New Zealand*

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***WHAT* is the minimum size for Noah's Ark?**

*I ASSUME* this correspondence is closed now that we have had the definitive answer from R Lord (Notes & Queries, January 26). — *Steve Babbage, Newbury, Berkshire*

## Any answers?

***IS THERE* any truth in the claim that warm or hot water freezes faster than cold water? —** *John Hodges, London*

***I UNDERSTAND* that the Hungarian and Finnish languages share a common origin somewhere east of the Urals. Where exactly do they come from? —** *L Q Tran, Zurich, Switzerland*

***MORE* and more people are attaching powerful lights to the outside of their houses. Do the lights deter burglars or merely help them to operate more efficiently? —** *PM Jacobs, Crediton, Devon*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ

## Letter from Bamako Robert Lacville

# Women's work is never done

"*ROBERT*, please there is somebody to see you!" Under my mosquito net I groan. Sunday morning is sacred. The morning air is fresh and cool. Later the air will be hot, heavy with dust. I like to gaze up at the mango tree, admire the pink and white bougainvillaea cascading down the wall, stroke the dog through my sleeping net . . . I do *not* like visitors at 8am on a Sunday. "Who is it?"

"It is a white some body. A woman."

I crawl off my mattress. "Give her a chair, and put on the kettle to make tea."

Pat is an American PhD student who got my name from the US embassy. Her subject is something along the lines of "The impact of democratic governance on gender issues in rural and urban development, and socio-cultural change in evolving societies: a study of democracy and discrimination against women in West Africa".

A title too long, paced with jargon and ethnocentric prejudice. "Women in development" was a useful idea 20 years ago. Now the jargon-merchants have switched to "gender analysis". I take women very seriously, but it is difficult to be generous with "gender". But I'm only reacting against Western academia and its assumed superiority. Pat wasn't superior. She was fragile . . . brittle even. We ate papaya and banana with rice cakes and wild honey, and sipped our tea. Pat talked about problems with her questionnaire, and lectured me about women in West Africa.

I've heard it before: "Women do all the work. They are never consulted; cannot own land, cannot get bank loans, are not allowed to travel without their husbands' permission. Girls are married against their will to old men whom they cannot love; women need contraception to fight against the immoderate desire of men to procreate; men force women to be excised and keep them tied to hearth and children; women carry on their frail shoulders the whole burden of African family life . . ."

A mish-mash of half-truths and misunderstandings laced with sociology jargon and feminist ideology. To be helpful, I agreed where I could. "Yes, clitorectomy is evil, but it is mainly the grandmothers who insist on it."

Finally I made a speech: "Women's hard work is due to poverty, not sexual discrimination. In a village with plenty of properly equipped clean wells, solar cookers and diesel grain-mills, you would be amazed how much spare time the women have to spend on childcare, dancing and vegetable gardening." Pat wasn't listening.

The Malian women to whom Pat had given her questionnaire were not providing good answers. Since Pat spoke no Bambara and very little French, I was to help her interpret the inadequate answers.

I took a questionnaire and pointed to her first question: "What do I like best about myself?"

I tried to explain that the American "I" is fundamentally un-African. "How would you react, Pat, to a question which asked you in English: Why has disrespect for your deceased grandfather destroyed family unity and brought a bad harvest?"

Pat looked bemused. "Take my friend the African Princess," I continued. "She was named after her grandmother, so *her* mother always calls her mother. If she is grandma, how can she be myself? She is part of the family collective."

I don't think Pat understood. She showed me the next question. "What is the best thing about being a man?"

A women's credit agent had written: "I am not a man, so I cannot answer."

My eyes filled with tears of laughter. Pat was getting agitated. "I am sorry Pat, I am not laughing at you. I am laughing because time and again our foreign ideas prove perfectly out of place in Africa. This is such a sensible reply: come on, admit it! Why should you assume that a Malian woman would even consider that there are good things about being a man?"

I explained as best I could that the status of women is far superior to that of men within the family, which is what counts in Mali. What about social status, she asked?

"The family is society. The village is organised by families and the most important person in the family is the mother. Only in the big city is there 'society' in the American sense, and that is limited more or less to the French-speaking political classes and pop singers, perhaps 200,000 people in a population of 9 million."

*PAT* thought I was a male chauvinistic pig. So I took her with me to visit the African Princess. The Princess was unsympathetic: "Why do you want to isolate women? Aren't they part of the whole of society?"

As we drove to the next visit, Pat said the Princess was part of the problem: a member of the élite who ignores the difficulties of real women in the streets and the villages. Actually the Princess and I have spent the past eight years helping women artisans and unemployed youths to create jobs. Pat didn't believe me. I was beginning to feel less sorry for Pat. But I would make one more effort. I decided to take her to meet a real woman entrepreneur.

The rough cement walls of Fily's shop are a tapestry of colour. Rich, gold-embroidered robes for the Ramadan holiday hang beside ageing trousers from the second-hand market. Gorgeous dresses of damask shimmer in the sunlight. Fily achieves a three-dimensional effect by pinning smaller garments across the tapestry.

Fily has a diploma from the Institute of Arts in Bamako. Pat sniffs suspiciously. "Do you have difficulties because you are a woman?" I translate and Fily smiles helpfully. "My difficulties are to have enough customers."

"But what are your problems as a woman?" Silence. Fily looks confused. "How about access to finance? Does the bank fund you?"

Fily smiles happily: "The bank will only lend you money if you already have money. My father's pension buys only the millet and rice for the family."

Looking for sexual discrimination, Pat finds equality — in the lack of opportunity for young graduates. The one-party state crushed the private sector. So where does a woman like Fily find help?

"Since democracy came, the government excuses graduates from taxes and social security for two years, so that is a help. But there is no help for money unless, like me, you are lucky to have a nice uncle."

I said it was time to leave. But there is no stopping a feminist! Fily was forced to produce her accounts and the bank book showing how she is making repayments each month over the next two years to her uncle. Pat turned to the page with the uncle's name and photograph: he is white and his surname is Lacville.



# Finding gold in the Twilight Zone of the Dons

**Raymond Seitz**

Britain and America: Studies in Comparative History 1790-1970
edited by David Englander
Yale 352pp £35

*IN THIS* eclectic collection of essays, which contrasts selected developments in Britain and America, no single theme emerges, and university jargon creeps across the pages like ivy on a refectory wall. The editor's introduction serves as a warning that you are about to enter the Twilight Zone of the Dons: "Scholars who are sensitive to context yet committed to the development of generalised historical explanations, have — following Ragin — turned to a case-oriented holistic approach that can better accommodate problems of multiple causation . . ."

But the scholars know what they're talking about. If some of the subjects are a little arcane, there is still plenty of insight, and it's unlikely you will find anywhere else a learned essay comparing the social effects of street car suburbs in Boston and Leeds from 1850 to 1920 (complete with charts and maps).

On broader subjects, Mary Geiter and W A Speck offer a thoughtful essay on the emergence of a genuine American identity before the Revolution. They fix the early part of the 18th century as the time when settlers in America were transformed from colonists into colonials, and when America became something more than a geographical expression. A parallel "Britonisation" occurred in the mother country in the same period, and both these Protestant societies formed a sense of common purpose in response to the threat of the French Antichrist.

But unlike Britain, where political unity preceded national consciousness, American cultural identity took shape before national awareness. Part of this stemmed from the religious fervour of the Great Awakening (and religion continues to be a distinct feature of American life today). Only in the 1770s did the last piece — the politics — fall into place. By then, the authors conclude: "To get men to fight and die as American citizens was more potent than appealing to them to stand and fall as English subjects."

In another essay from this social sampler, Skocpol and Gretchen Ritter investigate the role of women in the social politics of both countries. They replay the theme of America as a matriarchal society and Britain as a patriarchal one, and point out that the well-educated American woman, even if disenfranchised, was far more politically active than her at-home British sister (in 1890, there were more women at Smith College alone than at all the Oxford and Cambridge colleges combined).

Social comparisons between Britain and America are always good grist for discussion. The two countries have long shared a progressive, reformist approach to public issues, though the respective answers have differed markedly. Still, comparisons are usually enlightening, and one of the intriguing aspects of the Anglo-American relationship is the easy flow of information and influence back and forth across the ocean.

These essays, as uneven and sometimes turgid as they may be, are a good reminder that each society can learn a lot from the other, and sometimes does. Our national decisions may be different, but the relationship makes those decisions better informed.

Raymond Seitz is a former US ambassador to Great Britain

# History on trial

**Keith Thomas**

A Monarchy Transformed: Britain 1603-1714
by Mark Kishlansky
The Penguin Press 386pp £25



**Charles I on his way to execution: the central moment in the turbulent 17th century (by Ernest Crofts)**

*WHEN I* was a schoolboy in the 1940s, the standard textbook on 17th century England was G M Trevelyan's England Under The Stuarts. First published in 1904, it was then in its 20th edition. In a vividly romantic narrative it told the story of how liberty and religious toleration triumphed over despotism and intolerance: "Never perhaps in any century have such rapid advances been made towards freedom."

Trevelyan's hegemony among sixth-formers was not dislodged until the appearance in 1961 of Christopher Hill's Century Of Revolution, Maurice Ashley's 17th century volume in the first Pelican History Of England (1952) having been a distinctly colourless affair. Like Trevelyan, Hill regarded the years between 1603 and 1714 as "perhaps the most decisive in English history". But he portrayed the Civil War as a conflict between classes; and, in direct contrast with Trevelyan, he stressed that "the liberties for which the men of property fought so valiantly during the 17th century were not extended to the lower half of the population".

In the ensuing decades, most of the liveliest scholars of the early modern period moved away from political history to social, economic and cultural topics. The study of 17th century political history was left to those of a revisionist disposition, averse to generalisation or the invocation of long-term causes, and temperamentally inclined to see politics as a matter of intricate detail, yielding no larger patterns or trends. For them, the Civil War was an accident which need never have happened. In place of the coherence offered by Trevelyan's Whiggism or Hill's Marxism, the prevailing philosophy became that of One Damn Thing After Another.

The volume in the new Penguin History of Britain by Mark Kishlansky, a Harvard professor, inevitably reflects this trend, even if it does occasionally rise above it. Like Trevelyan and Hill before him, Kishlansky regards the Stuart age as a defining moment in the history of Britain and of paramount importance for the subsequent political history of the western world. The period witnessed two spectacular revolutions, culminating in the execution of Charles I and the expulsion of James II; and it transformed a paternal despotism into a constitutional monarchy. It saw the union with Scotland and the extension of control over Ireland; and it laid the foundations of the first British empire and of British financial and commercial supremacy.

However, Kishlansky's readers will have to be very attentive if they are to work out quite why all this happened, because his conception of political history is unilluminatingly narrow. Social, economic, cultural and intellectual developments are all excluded, though a tantalising prologue which emphasises that this was the age of Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, Wren, Purcell, Newton et al reminds us of just how much we are missing. Instead, the book offers an unbroken political narrative, which largely eschews interpretation or explanatory generalisation.

Although nearly every sentence is well-informed and carefully considered, there are inevitable slips: Francis Bacon becomes an earl; the title of Clarendon's History is wrongly given; the beginning of the Cromwellian Protectorate is misdated. For the most part, however, the text is faultlessly accurate. The exposition is sharp, incisive and punctuated by the occasional epigram: "John Lilburne [the Leveller] had the rare capacity to see a nettle whenever an olive branch was offered him".

*BUT WHAT* one misses is that originality of approach and boldness of interpretation which made Trevelyan and Hill into much-loved classics. Beginners will find this book a reliable, though highly condensed, manual, but, if asked whether the Civil War had long-term causes or why it was won by Parliament, they may well be at a loss. On a very careful reading of the text it is just possible to extract the germs of an explanatory scheme of a revisionist character. Parliament, says Kishlansky, was not an oppositional institution in the early 17th century, indeed hardly an institution at all. Charles I's early political difficulties all stemmed from his inability to make war, although the "ambiguities" of the Jacobean Church settlement and other "contradictions" created principled dissension within the governing élite of a kind that a political system which presupposed consensus was unable to accommodate.

Even after the meeting of the Long Parliament there was no inkling that the nation was on the brink of the Civil War; it was only the fighting which "turned a stable marriage of beliefs into irreconcilable differences". The Interregnum was dogged by the "contradictory impulses" of Puritan enthusiasm and gentry constitutionalism. Charles II, unlike his father, was "capable of living with contradiction", whereas James II, though "in many ways the most capable of all the Stuarts", was not. By the end of the period a more stable political system had evolved which frankly accepted an adversarial style.

It would have been helpful if Kishlansky had done more to spell out the nature of the "contradictions" which he rightly sees as running through the period. As it is, one must doubt whether this narrowly political text is quite "the definitive history of Britain for our day and generation" which the new Penguin History claims to be. It should be noted that, in his excellent bibliography, Kishlansky tells us that Hill's Century Of Revolution is "still worth reading".

This book is available at a special discount price of £20 from Books@The Guardian Weekly



## Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

**The Statement, by Brian Moore (Flamingo, £5.99)**

*IT WAS* recently reported that Maurice Papon, once a senior official of the Vichy government, who is now to be tried in connection with the deportation of 1,690 French Jews between 1942 and 1944. I remind you of this fact in case you imagine the matter of Brian Moore's latest novel to be fanciful, or exaggerated. As it turns out, he has rather played things down, if anything. Moore's novel is about Pierre Brossard, an enthusiastic French Nazi, who is forced to leave the sanctuary of the monastery where he has been hiding after a gunman tracks him down and nearly manages to kill him. As a disciplined, lean thriller, told with an almost clinical skill and pace, The Statement is superb; and uncomfortably illuminating.

**A User's Guide to the Millennium, by J G Ballard (Flamingo, £6.99)**

*A RATHER* corny and opportunistic title for Ballard's collected essays and reviews. It will do, just: in an essay on Dali, he diagnoses "the most sinister casualty of the century: the death of affect", and goes on to say that "what our children have to fear are not the cars on the freeways of tomorrow but our own pleasure in calculating the most elegant parameters of their deaths." Which, in 1969, was truly prophetic, and shocking; it also serves as a useful statement about his own work.

**A White Merc With Fins, by James Hawes (Vintage, £5.99)**

*A CAPER* novel, crossed with a state-of-the-nation novel, in which a balding narrator devises the perfect bank robbery in order to escape a life of tedium. The close fit between the scam of robbing a bank, and the scam of having produced this novel, is what gives it most of its snap (its relentlessly hip tone both helps and hinders) but the involvement of the IRA, which might have seemed OK during the ceasefire, looks like a worse idea now.

**Dared and Done: The Marriage of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, by Julia Markus (Bloomsbury, £9.99)**

*A REMARKABLE* courtship, as Barrett had been confined to her home since the age of 14; this is the true stuff of melodrama. Markus has scoured the correspondence to give us the story, and seems to have gone slightly wiggy and Victorian in doing so. Fair enough. Asked Elizabeth: "Can I be as good for you as morphine is for me, I wonder"; now, that's love.

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# Swine of a writer

**Sylvia Brownrigg**

The Collected Stories
by Paul Theroux
Hamish Hamilton 660pp £20

*PAUL THEROUX* will go anywhere. He will willingly explore the blighted territory of a failing marriage; the tangled jungle of a mad poet's secret anti-Semitism; the belated sexual guilt of a Hindu. In this great slab of his short fiction, Theroux is curiously bolder than in his travel writings. Fiction gives him what he clearly hungers for: the chance to travel incognito. Theroux has often remarked how much happier he is when he is anonymous — "I am calmest in remote places, haunting people who have no need of books and no idea what I do," he says in the introduction to this collection. These are collected stories rather than selected ones — the volume comprises Theroux's four earlier collections, two books from his time in Africa and Singapore in the seventies with two later volumes from London (where Theroux lived for nearly 20 years). Four unanthologised stories are also included, but nearly all of these pieces were published before 1982.

This is a book of many and varied pleasures; to read it is to feel alert, curious, adventurous. The stories, which can be brief, often seem like culled or invented dinner-party anecdotes. We are in the rich land of expatriates here, whether they are English doctors in Malaysia or American academics in London or Burundi royals in Kampala. You can hear the voice starting as the coffee is poured: "Did I ever tell you about the Siberian defector who tried to blackmail me . . . ?" The last 40-odd stories are narrated by an American consular officer, Spencer Savage, who endures two years hardship post in Malaysia before he is transferred to the ultimate glamour post: London. Spencer, both bachelor and orphan, is a cool, rather faceless man whose bachelorhood is not permanent — the book ends with the optimistic monosyllables "I do".

This seems a deliberate irony, however, in a collection whose pages weigh overwhelmingly against any faith in that promise. Theroux's couples bicker, compete, and occasionally try to kill one another. "Married people argue about everything — anything," is a recurring theme, though this harsh cynicism has its poignant side, as in the piece about an American teacher in Singapore: "Len Rowley was a private soul, and marriage had increased his loneliness by violating his reveries."

Those who know Theroux's work will be familiar both with his sharp ear for detail — "his voice had the plain splintery cadences of an Iowa Lutheran being truthful" — and with his vast, indulgent habit of generalisation. Years ago in Kampala, Theroux was befriended by Naipaul, and it is an association that has left its mark. From Naipaul, Theroux learnt detachment. But Theroux has never quite decided himself whether to take on the Naipaulian mantle of contempt; Theroux is enough of an American still to want to be thought of as a good guy, and this ambivalence shows in his writing. He wants it both ways: he will criticise the "Club Bore" one minute — "as he was married to a Chinese girl he felt he could call them 'Chinks' without blame" — and sound like him the next, saying, "Acceptance is an Asiatic disease" or "The youths on the street reminded me of the sort of aimless mobs I had seen in Africa and Malaysia."

Still, Theroux's cavalier style allows him to make comic notes on ethnic prejudices. The Englishman condemns the Japanese Shimura as "not very clubbable"; the Malay driver is insulted by having to chauffeur an Indian family; and the Malays and Chinese together despise the native Larut tribespeople. And lest anyone worry about Theroux's Western bias, he reserves some of his fiercest judgments for the English, as readers of his travelogue The Kingdom By The Sea will not be surprised to hear. "The British liked having secrets — they had lost so much else," he taunts; "The British are like those naked Indians who hide in the Brazilian jungle — not timid, but fanatically private and untrusting." Such comments will rattle some readers, though they may also provide small, secret thrills for other London exiles.

*THEROUX* once wrote that "the expatriate who fails to be a person in any subtle sense can still, with a little effort, succeed as 'a character' "; it is a weakness of this book that it contains more "characters" than it does people. The diplomats, writers, hangers-on and politicians who amble through these pages are certainly recognisable in their vanity, their bluster, their ambition. Theroux is superb at nailing a certain kind of professional ego, whether it's that of the vapid American Ambassador Noyes, or of the eminent writer Sir Charles Moonman, easily flattered in the wonderful story "Algebra". But you rarely know what lies behind these unpleasant or laughable souls. And what of the upright and rather sour Spencer himself, who is so busy feeling superior to the people he observes (be they humbled aristocrats or deluded novelists) that he conveys next to nothing about his own spirit?

Still, there aren't many storytellers in whose company you can so comfortably remain for more than 600 pages. People have often bandied the names Greene or Maugham around in connection with Theroux; but the best of these, in their wise expat wit, remind me of the Canadian Mavis Gallant. In "The Autumn Dog" Theroux draws a layered portrait of a divorcée's affair with a 19-year-old boy; in "Zombies" he climbs into the weary alcoholism of an 82-year-old writer.

As I carted around this hefty tome, a scholar stopped me in the library to offer this spontaneous commentary. "Paul Theroux: he lives in Hawaii now, doesn't he? He divorced his wife, and divides his time between there and the Cape." The man, an American, shook his head. "He's a swine, but a damn good writer."

*This book is available at the special discount price of £16 from Books@The Guardian Weekly*





It looks like a very civil war. But this was the calm before the firestorm, *writes Robert McCrum.* The American Heritage New History Of The Civil War by Bruce Catton (Viking, £25) tells the gripping story of the war between the states with the help of generous illustration. This was the first war to be caught on camera. Above, we see Ulysses S Grant conferring with the staff officers of the army of the Potomac outside Massaponax church. Grant is standing at the far left, leaning over a pew to study a battle map. One of his infantrymen wrote in his diary: "The old story again — a big slaughter, and nothing gained."

# Life closely observed

**OBITUARY**
Bohumil Hrabal

*BOHUMIL HRABAL*, who has died aged 82 after a fall from the fifth floor of a hospital where he was being treated for arthritis, was the most imaginative Czech writer of the 20th century.

He was, through no fault of his own, a latecomer to literature. When he first attempted to publish a small collection of poems, the book, already set in type, was circulated unofficially from the printers in 1949 after the communist takeover. In 1954, an edition of his short stories was issued in just 250 copies.

His real chance came in 1956, when the mild political thaw after Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin allowed Czech publishers to look for new talent. Hrabal was invited to submit his writing; even then, his tales had to be given a more conventional shape before the editor would dare to send them to the censors and printers. In spite of all precautions, those stories, too, failed to see the light of day: the political climate worsened and Hrabal's book, ready for printing, was banned. Not until 1963 did a volume of his short stories, Perlicka na dne (A Pearl In The Deep) finally appear, and overnight made him popular.

Hrabal was then nearly 50. He was born in Brno, but spent most of his childhood in Nymburk, where his father was the manager of a brewery. He went to Prague in 1934 to study law, but when Czech universities were shut down during the German occupation he worked on the railway and ended up as a train dispatcher. Although he completed his studies with a doctorate, the law was one of the few trades he never practised. He would claim that it was to overcome his shyness that he had taken up being a travelling salesman. In the early 1950s, he worked in the Kladno steel foundries and, after a serious accident, transferred to a warehouse in Prague. His last job was that of a stagehand, but after 1963, he devoted himself entirely to literature.

Two features of Hrabal's stories were striking when they were first published: the absence of any ideology and the choice of characters. Even in the liberalising 1960s, the former was still a novelty, especially when combined with zany tales peopled by outcasts. According to the socialist-realist canon, such figures were not supposed to exist. Yet they ideally fitted Hrabal's unique vision of the world, acutely perceptive of the grotesque and of beauty hidden under triviality.

Most critics were enthusiastic; readers were either rapturous or repelled, unaccustomed as they were to an incursion of raw life into prose. Another book of short stories followed and then Taneeni hodiny pro starsi a pokrocile (Dancing Lessons For The Elderly And The Advanced) narrating, in a single book-long sentence, the life of an eccentric character with the magic power to turn banality into brilliance. The inspiration for this was the author's Uncle Pepin, who "once came for a two-week visit and stayed on for 40 years". His credo was similar to Hrabal's own: "The world is maddeningly beautiful. Well, it isn't really, but that is how I see it." By 1968, another three volumes of short stories, exquisite and outrageous, were in print.

In the West, Hrabal's work attracted attention only after the success of Jiri Menzel's Oscar-winning film Closely Observed Trains, based on Hrabal's rewriting of an earlier, more extravagant tale. The book was translated into English, but a more interesting selection of stories remained until recently available only in a US edition.

Meanwhile the author encountered yet another turn of fate. After the Soviet invasion in 1968 and the imposition of a neo-Stalinist regime, Hrabal was considered to be too non-political, too much out of the ordinary, to escape banning. Only when, in 1975, he expressed vague support for the new authorities, could his works be published again: even then, only the innocuous ones, and they showed signs of heavy editing when compared with *samizdat* versions in circulation.

After the November 1989 revolution, Hrabal admitted that he had erred on the side of caution and adjusted his books to official requirements. Luckily, the translations into English were based on the Czech originals. Among them were Too Loud A Solitude written in the early 1970s, at the time he was banned. It was at such times, when writing became the only meaningful activity left to him, that Hrabal produced his best work. The book presents an almost apocalyptic vision of the world from a scrap paper yard, where wisdom and beauty created by humanity and entrusted to print are pressed into bales together with bloodied wastepaper from butchers' shops and abattoirs; in a fury of nihilism all is pulped.

Hrabal's last major work, which, before the revolution could appear only outside Czechoslovakia, was his three-volume autobiography, where he used the Gertrude Stein trick of having someone else tell it — his wife. This allowed him to be critical and mockingly frank about himself. It also contained the first indications that he lived in dread of the secret police; he openly confessed to this after the revolution, when he described how his fear made him sign any statement put in front of him.

Although Hrabal's books sold in Czechoslovakia in hundreds of thousands, fame and fortune never affected his life; a less pretentious person would be hard to find. He was easily accessible, while retaining the freedom to express vociferously his irritation with fools.

**Igor Hájek**

Bohumil Hrabal, writer, born March 28, 1914; died February 3, 1997





# How to become somebody

**Stefan Collini**

Who's Who 1997
A&C Black 2,168pp £98

*HOW DOES* one get into Who's Who? Here's the tried and trusty method: emerge from the birth canal; breathe; carry on breathing longer than the man whose sperm is alleged to have provoked your conception. And that's all there is to it: you're in.

You're right — there's a catch. The ejaculator in question has to be the bearer of an hereditary title; it also helps if you emerge from said birth canal sporting a proto-penis rather than a proto-vagina, and if, by some rather doubtful system of counting, you are the "first" such product of said man's sperm. (I'm sorry to be so biological, but this is partly a bloodstock handbook.)

While you're waiting to outlive the old man, you don't have to do anything special, though you might pass the time brushing up your knowledge of the dates of the creations of the various titles you will inherit, since these are going to be a large part of your entry in Who's Who. Indeed, there are clearly some people who consider it rather vulgar to list too many dates later than the mid-17th century.

Interestingly, this seems to coincide with the kind of people who have more first names than jobs. Charles Henry John Benedict Crofton Chetwynd Chetwynd-Talbot, 22nd Earl of Shrewsbury and Waterford, may be the man to beat here, though I have a soft spot for the figure whose *entire entry* reads: "Encombe, Viscount; John Francis Thomas Marie Joseph Columba Fidelis Scott; b. 9 July 1962; s and heir of 5th Earl of Eldon, qv." But, then, one is fairly warned, since the whole thing kicks off with "the Sovereign" (rather pushily out of alphabetical order), followed by a selection of her rellies (lots of "marr. diss." here). The Queen does not seem to have any "recreations", though the postcode for Buck House is thoughtfully provided. Oddly enough, I can't seem to find an entry for that Spencer girl, though her younger brother the 9th Earl is in (see method mentioned above), as is her former brother-in-law, now listed as "consultant, Gleneagles Mark Phillips Equestrian Centre". I suppose once she separated from her husband she must have disappeared from the public eye.

The "public eye" is obviously one of the implicit principles of selection, though the weird mixture of criteria at work faithfully reflects the confusion about who is "somebody" in a snobbish country in the full throes of the celebrity revolution. The only stated policy is "to list people who, through their careers, affect the political, economic, scientific and artistic life of the country" (see eg, "Encombe, Viscount", above).

In practice, the main criteria seem to be birth, office, achievement and celebrity. Listing the criteria in that order brings out how it is also an historical sequence: these have been the underlying principles that have determined prominence in successive stages of the development of modern society. Roughly speaking, birth is the 18th century principle, office the 19th, achievement the 20th, and celebrity the 21st. However, as with so much else in British history, the earlier stages have not been wholly superseded by the later ones, but have continued to co-exist alongside them.

When Who's Who started in 1849 it consisted of 39 lists of "ranks and appointments" with the names of their occupants. This was, in its way, an objective listing. It was a catalogue of roles, not a selection of famous individuals.

Achievement, the officially acknowledged principle of our century, turns the spotlight on the individual, though of course it still assumes a degree of consensus about what activities are to count as "achievements". But although achievement requires recognition, it does not necessarily involve fame. However, in the fourth age, which is now upon us, the celebrity is, notoriously, someone who is famous for being famous. The "public eye" squints through the lens of a tabloid photographer's camera: the Top People have been joined by the topless.

The present edition certainly lists a lot of people whose inclusion would have been unthinkable to the Victorians. Cooks, for example, though these days even they list their academic qualifications, which in Michel Roux's case includes the wonderful "Brevet de Maitrise (Patisserie)". And then there are those who seem to get in largely by being rude to (see Paxman, Jeremy) or about (see Hitchens, Christopher) many of the people already included.

But isn't this mixture, as defenders of British institutions so often say, precisely part of its charm? Hence, all those whimsical "recreations", or the absurd archaism of having "clubs" as a standard category of information, as though anyone who's anyone is always pottering down to St James for a pink gin before lunch (I hope when Nick Hornby gets in he lists "Arsenal FC").

Speaking of power, its real source in modern Britain is, of course, not birth or office but the control of huge sums of capital. Accordingly, Bill "Mr Microsoft" Gates is in (being the richest man in the world ought to be good for something), as is George Soros, who lists "Chancellor-hunting" among his recreations (actually, as Hoggart, Simon, qv, would say, I made that bit up).

As with most works of reference, this slab of pre-obituaries is always recommended for the pleasures of browsing. For those who like this sort of thing, I can reveal that the human equivalent of "aardvark" is currently Aaronson, Graham Raphael, while the role of "zymurgy" is played by Zunz, Sir Gerhard Jacob.

The fact is, Who's Who probably represents one of the earliest and most successful mail-shots in history. Every year unsolicited requests for personal information are mailed to thousands of addresses (many of them available in you-know-where). For some curious reason, people who otherwise treat junk mail with the respect it deserves conscientiously complete and return the kind of details a life-insurance salesman would die for.

By the way, the surest method of getting out of Who's Who is as biological as the method for getting in — some 800 people joined the great club in the sky last year. But there's no rest for the famous; almost certainly, the hot topic in the celestial smoking-room is whether one will make it into the Dictionary Of National Biography. Lasting fame; ah, if only.



# Falling for the fairy tale

**Alison Hall**

Lost Prince: The Unsolved Mystery of Kaspar Hauser
by Jeffrey Moussaleff Masson
The Free House, New York 254pp £16.99

*WHY* did the arrival of a young boy in the centre of Nuremberg in May 1828 spawn several thousand texts, two films, a play and even, recently, a psychiatric syndrome? The boy was a stranger — nobody knew who he was or where he came from. He had a letter of introduction to a cavalry captain and said he wanted to be a rider like his father. This in itself didn't constitute much of a problem. After all this was post-Napoleonic Europe. As Stendhal and others remind us, lads off in search of adventure were all the rage.

However, what really set this boy apart was the fact that he couldn't walk very well, his speech was limited and he seemed like a small child in an adolescent body.

This "wild boy" became the centre of prurient interest. He was a rather simple and gentle character, though he had interesting and peculiar abilities — like seeing very far in the dark and being especially sensitive towards animals. His fame spread and he became "the Child of Europe", a post recently vacated by the Wild Boy of Aveyron who had died that year. He went to live with first one, then another, teacher and due to his childlike curiosity and remarkable memory learned a great deal very quickly. A year after he arrived in Nuremberg, in October 1829 the boy received an injury — a substantial cut to his forehead. Four years later, in December 1832, he received a further injury to his chest from which he died a few days later. So ended a short and sad life.

There are two favoured explanations. One is that Kaspar Hauser, the name the boy claimed, was a beggar who pretended to be a simpleton to gain sympathy. His injuries were self-inflicted and designed to elicit further attention when public interest was on the wane.

The more exciting explanation goes like this. Napoleon's adopted daughter Stephanie de Beauharnais married Karl, Duke of Baden. They had a son in 1812. However Luise, second wife of Karl's father and his stepmother keen to ensure that her own son would inherit the Baden throne (which he eventually did), swapped Stephanie and Karl's son with an ailing child who died shortly after. The healthy child heir was spirited away to live on bread and water in a dungeon, attended by a dark man whom he never saw. When he was in his mid-teens the man who had tended him took him to Nuremberg and gave him the letter of introduction to the cavalry captain. Unfortunately for the conspirators he began to remember items from his early life and his fame caused them such worry that they recruited the English Earl of Stanhope to pretend friendship and protection for the boy as a cover for a first bungled murder attempt and a second successful one.

Jeffrey Masson's book offers a range of documentation pertaining to the case. He provides a first complete translation of Feuerbach's 1832 text. This is preceded by a very lengthy introduction in which Masson gives unqualified support to the lost prince thesis and makes a crude argument linking the story to his pet project — child abuse.

The problem is that Masson has rather fixed sympathies and apparently not much of a capacity for penetrating thinking. But anyone with a serious interest in research wouldn't be content with staging the document-finding coup without consolidating their effort with some serious questions.

ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

# A ditch in time . . .

**Paul Evans**

*THE TRACK* up Sunnyhill, near Clun in Shropshire, climbs through a dark plantation of spruce. The top of the hill opens to the sky and the track squeezes through the remains of gateways in the ramparts to the heart of the fort. This place, the Bury Ditches, is one of the best preserved Iron Age hill forts in the Welsh Marches.

Built during the first millennium BC, the Bury Ditches or Rings — depending on whether you focus on the mounds or the gullies between them — was a major centre of permanent settlement. The earthworks were constructed in several stages with two ramparts on the south and four on the north. These almost circular rings and ditches defended the farmsteads within. Once planted over, like the surrounding hillsides, the fort was cleared years ago and all that remain of the trees are blackened stumps like bad teeth poking through the shaley earth.

But clearing away the plantation has allowed denizens of a more ancient forest to show through. Scattered among the rings and ditches are stunted holly trees. The holly's dark spiky leaves gleam in the winter sun like weapons protecting the resurgence of trees once sacred to the Celts. In the hill country of the Welsh Marches, hollies are a symbol of a more ancient relationship between people and Nature. They appear in woods, hedges and ancient boundary lines and many are of great age. Just a few miles away on the Stiperstones is a holly grove thought to be the oldest in Europe. Although they may appear unpalatable, holly leaves provided essential food for animals during the winter, a practice the peoples of this fort knew well. Hollies also have an older magic and perhaps they are reclaiming a sacred precinct here.

Even on the clearest, bluest, brightest day of the year so far, the rings lock in their secrets. Walking the earthworks, the ground is covered by short fine grasses and mosses of glowing emerald which harbour tiny grey cups of lichen between the splinters of stone. But fascinating as this place is, the eye is drawn away to the surrounding hills. Line after line of hills slide into each other to the hazy blue horizon in every direction. Long Mynd, Stiperstones, Corndon, Wenlock Edge, Llanfraid, Clun Forest, Radnor Forest and hundreds of hills between, ring round this large sky echoing the earthworks here. Century upon century folds between them.

Most of the surrounding hills have ancient settlements on them. Few are more than fractured, cryptic signs of a civilisation which wrote its presence into the earth of the uplands: hill forts, burial mounds, ridgeways, cairns, standing stones. From here, the fires of Caer Din Ring, Fron Camp, Caer Caradoc and many others would be clearly visible on such a day. What were these communities like? What fear drove them to build such fortresses? Here they kept their horses and cattle, safe from the marauders who "farmed with the spear". Safe, too, from the wolves and bears whose ghosts slip silently through the woods between the hills. Buzzards wheel across the sky as they did then. The breeze on which they hang once blew the smoke from the fires of Bury Ditches and the voices of its people into the far blue yonder.

The sun begins to sink beyond Clun Forest. It is upwards to the sun these hill forts face, they owe no other allegiance. Along the passage of the burnished shield, the golden head, the bird of fire, the great bull, from the eastern to the western edges of the sky, roll the centuries. There remains a whispering here in the grass and hollies. A growing darkness stalks the rings and ditches.

## Chess Leonard Barden

*THE MOST* competitive event at the annual Hastings congress is not the Premier, with its 10 invited grandmasters, but the secondary Challengers tournament at the end of the pier, which this year featured nearly 200 experts from some 20 countries. Those finishing at the top of the Challengers table hope to qualify for next year's Premier; mid-table, they aim at master results; and near the bottom, the target is a Fide world ranking, the first step on the long road to Kasparov.

While the final outcome pleases a few, many more leave town feeling disappointed. This year, 16 players failed to complete, while David Bronstein, once a world-title challenger himself, drew all of his games.

Hastings GM James Plaskett was one of two Premier qualifiers, another ad for the town where the BCF has its offices. The chess club is open daily, and two former residents have won world titles, for women and for under-16s. Imaginative chess is Plaskett's forte, and against McNab his central pawns charged down the board to set up a brilliancy where Black sacrifices first a rook, then a queen.

**McNab v Plaskett**

**1 c4 b6 2 b3 Bb7 3 Bb2 e6 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 e3 d5 6 Be2** 6 d4 and 7 Bd3 is more active. **Bd6 7 0-0 Nbd7 8 d4 0-0 9 Nbd2 Ne4 10 Nxe4 dxe4 11 Ne5 f5 12 Nxd7** White is already thinking of a draw. A better way is 12 f4 exf3 13 Bxf3 Bxf3 14 Qxf3 Bxe5 15 dxe5 Nc5 16 Ba3.

**Qxd7 13 f4 Qe7 14 Rf2 e5 15 g4?** A wild attacking try which weakens his own king. White stands worse, but 15 Qf1 and 16 Rd1 puts the onus on Black.

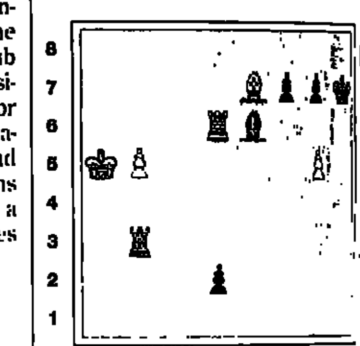
**exd4 16 gxf5?** Better 16 Bxd4 **d3! 17 Rg2 e5!** Evading the trap dxe2?? 18 Qxd6! **18 Bh5 Rxf5 19 Qg4 Raf8 20 Kh1 Rxf4!** A thematic sacrifice for such positions. Black soon regains some material, and his central pawns strangle White's frantic attempts at counterplay.

**21 exf4 Rxf4 22 Qh3 e3 23 Bg4 Bxg2+ 24 Qxg2 e4 25 Be6+ Kf8** Not Qxe6?? **26 Bd5 e2 27 Rg1 g6 28 Bc1 Rh4 29 h3 Ke8!** Prepares Qd7, which would be a blunder immediately due to Qf2+ and Qxh4. With no defence, White gracefully sets up a concluding brilliancy.

**30 Bg5 Qxg5! 31 Bc6+ Kf8** But not Kd8??, when 32 Qxg5 gives check. **32 Qxg5 Rxh3+ 33 Kg2 Rh2 mate.**

● If you live in Britain and would like to know the address and meeting night of your local chess club, call the British Chess Federation on 01424 442500. The BCF also issues a calendar with details of congresses where you can qualify for an official national ranking.

**No 2459**



Reshevsky v Horowitz, US Championship, 1942. Defeat for White here would give first prize to Reshevsky's rival Kashdan, who had wanted to turn pro for a decade but needed the American title to launch his career change.

Horowitz felt his d2 pawn should win, but was worried by the b5 pawn. He simplified by 1 . . . Bc4? Rxd2 Rxb5+, and Reshevsky drew. Then he won the championship title match crushingly, and poor Kashdan had to return to selling insurance. What should Black have played in the diagram?

**No 2458:** a 1 Nf3 Nc6 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 Nd4 Nd5 4 Nxc6 dxc6 5 Nxd5 cxd5. b 1 Nf3 d5 2 Ne5 Nf6 3 Nc6 Nd7 4 Nxb8 Nxb8.

## Quick crossword no. 353

**Across**

1 Cease to argue the point (5,2,6)
8 Go away by moonlight? (4)
9 Rich and spacious (8)
10 Improve (10)
12 False (6)
14 Up-to-date (6)
15 When fancy turns to love? (6-4)
19 Type of gun (8)
20 Spy or breakwater (4)
21 Nuts from the Middle East (6,7)

**Down**

2 Source of wealth (4-4)
3 Praise (5)
4 Splendid (3-4)
5 Divided river mouth (5)
6 Stupid person (3-4)
7 Vigour and style (4)
11 Collapsed or shrivelled (8)
13 Answer (7)
14 Inorganic matter (7)
16 Black bird (5)
17 Speed in music (5)
18 Nil (4)

**Last week's solution**

## Bridge Zia Mahmood

*HERE ARE* my answers to the first three problems in last year's Christmas competition. The remaining two answers and the prizewinners will be announced next week. Because of the number of people who replied by e-mail, the total entry was higher than ever before, and the standard of the answers on a difficult set of problems was excellent.

**Problem 1**

| South | West | North | East |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♠ | No | 1NT | No |
| ? | | | |

♠AKJ76 ♥A2 ♦73 ♣AQ95

**Rank in order of preference:**
2♣; 2NT; 3♣

**My answer:** 3♣; 2♣; 2NT. The great Adam Meredith used to say that 5-4-2-2 was a distribution made for playing in a suit, not in NT. If partner has a club fit, or a partial spade fit, or both, we definitely belong in a black suit, and we might even make a slam in clubs! So I prefer both 3♣ and 2♣ to 2NT, which could lead us into danger if partner is weak in either red suit. The fine controls in this hand, and the fact that my long suits are also my strong suits, weigh the scales very heavily in favour of 3♣.

**Problem 2**

| South | West | North | East |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 3♦ |
| ? | | | |

♠A10953 ♥KQ72 ♦4 ♣K65

**Rank in order of preference:**
pass; double; 3♠

**My answer:** double; 3♠; pass. It's risky, but you must get into the bidding when the enemy pre-empt and you are short in their suit. If the opening bid had been 1♦, modern experts would overcall 1♠ in preference to double, hoping to introduce the hearts later. But at the three level, you are cramped, and must try to describe your hand as well as you can with one shot.

A simple rule for dealing with pre-emptive openings is to treat them as you would treat an opening at the one level. If you would double 1♦ for takeout, you should almost certainly double 3♦ for takeout. That is good advice, but should not be taken to extremes. While an overcall at the one level promises no more than 8 or 9 points with a good suit, a three-level overcall of an enemy pre-empt ought to be based on at least the values for an opening bid.

**Problem 3**

| South | West | North | East |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♠ | No | 2♥ | No |
| ? | | | |

♠KQ9832 ♥Q65 ♦A4 ♣Q6

**Rank in order of preference:**
2♠; 3♥; 4♥

**My answer:** 3♥; 4♥; 2♠. The last is for real hand hogs — partner has promised at least five hearts with his response, and there is no reason at all not to support him. If I had the ace of spades instead of the king-queen, I would probably go all the way to four hearts, but the fact that the spade honours may be no use at all to partner inclines me to the more conservative action. Sorry to all those solvers who guessed that I would overbid as usual, but my experience is that partners always bid four hearts in this sequence anyway, and I prefer to have something in hand so that it isn't my fault when they go down!



**Boxing** WBC heavyweight championship

# Hollow victory for Lewis

**Richard Williams in Las Vegas**



Grieving Las Vegas . . . Oliver McCall's corner team try to console him after his defeat by Lennox Lewis PHOTOGRAPH: JEFF SCHEID

THE FIRST time Lennox Lewis won the World Boxing Council's heavyweight championship belt he had to retrieve it from the garbage can into which Riddick Bowe's manager had thrown it. On Friday night last week he buckled the belt around his waist once more, but the manner of the repossession was hardly more salubrious or satisfying.

While Lewis is a world champion in title once again, the hapless Oliver McCall unfortunately declined to provide any sort of yardstick against which his true standing could be measured. Their contest, stopped by the referee Mills Lane after 55 seconds of the fifth round, proved a lot about McCall but nothing much about Lewis.

Almost anyone in the arena, from HBO commentator George Foreman to the showgirls who carried the round cards, could have put on a more convincingly aggressive performance than McCall, whose refusal to defend himself persuaded Lane to terminate the proceedings.

The benefits of the 31-year-old American fighter's much publicised treatment for his long-term addiction to crack cocaine seemed to have been left in the dressing-room as he sprinted up the aisle and launched himself wildly through the ropes, but then declined to do anything so straightforward as participate in a boxing contest.

Emanuel Steward, who trained McCall for his victory over Lewis in their first meeting two years ago before joining the British boxer's camp, had promised an emotional fight, but even such an experienced and worldly-wise man as he could have had no idea of the bizarre spectacle that would unfold at the Hilton hotel before a claimed audience of 4,800, some of whom had paid $400 for a ringside view of the kind of farce that ensures the continuing notoriety of heavyweight boxing.

McCall began with the anticipated rush, hoping for an opportunity to repeat the right-hander that put his opponent down in 1994, but a left-right combination allowed Lewis to edge the opening round. The second round was all square (one judge even gave it to McCall) but another Lewis combination had provoked a display of taunting aimed at camouflaging its effect. Lewis briefly stiffened his previously floppy jab at the beginning of the third, jolting McCall on four occasions but showing circumspection by resisting the temptation to follow in at close quarters.

He had done enough nevertheless to make McCall start getting weird. At the end of the third the American continued to pace around the ring, refusing to return to his corner. His gathering confusion was exacerbated early in the fourth when Lewis caught him flush on the cheekbone with a roundhouse right, prompting an exaggerated show of disdain which earned a lecture from the referee and boos from all sides.

At the end of the round McCall's countenance suddenly crumpled and he began to weep openly. Lane ordered him to sit down and asked if he wanted to carry on. "At first he said no and then he said yes," his trainer, George Benton, reported. "He didn't know what the hell he wanted to do. He was in total confusion." But, since he looked in perfect physical shape, Lane correctly allowed him to continue.

His tears were still flowing as he rose for the fifth. No longer even remotely interested in landing a punch, he tried to stand off the wary Lewis but hardly seemed to bother trying to avoid a big right uppercut. Moments later the referee concluded that he had seen enough. The booing redoubled, this time mixed with the cheers of the British fans as the new champion's arms were raised.

"It's been a long time coming," Lewis said afterwards, reflecting on the two-year legal battle he had waged to be allowed to compete for the vacant title. "I prepared myself for 15 weeks for this fight. That was the hard part. The fight was the easy part."

**Rugby Union** Pilkington Cup: Bath 28, Leicester 39

# Leicester take charge

**Robert Armstrong**

LEICESTER took a giant step towards winning the cup for only the second time in 15 years with an astonishing five-try victory over the holders Bath at the Recreation Ground in the sixth round of the cup. Speculation that their recent European Cup defeat by Brive might have turned the Tigers into toothless tabby cats proved wholly unfounded: Saturday's triumph was probably the most dynamic display of total football yet seen in the domestic knockout competition.

Bath, proud winners of the Cup 10 times in the past 13 seasons, were humbled by a side that has developed an infinitely superior brand of near-continuous running and passing since the Australian coach Bob Dwyer took over last summer. With a quarter-hour remaining Leicester, who led 36-14, were threatening a half-century of points: in the event late scrambled tries by de Glanville and Guscott saved Bath from the trauma of complete humiliation.

The Tigers, who now travel to Newcastle in the quarter-finals, remain firmly on course for a league and cup double, something Bath have achieved three times during the nineties. However, Dwyer refuses to look further ahead than the next game. Besides, the Australian forecasts that Saracens might emerge as dark horses in both competitions.

Dwyer's bold decision to leave out Dean Richards in favour of the young Irish No 8 Eric Miller paid off handsomely in terms of quick early ball through successive phases, though the great man did come on as a substitute for John Wells near the end.

"You choose your team on the basis of the performance you want from the next game," said Dwyer. "It's encouraging that Dean — and John — are willing to accept in good spirit what is thought best for the team at any given time."

Leicester's exhilarating football, though, had less to do with shrewd selection than with the renewed vitality of their pack after the Brive set-back and the positive option-taking of their half-backs, Austin Healey and the South African, Joel Stransky.

Healey proved again that he is the hardest scrum-half in England to defend against, while Stransky showed remarkable assurance in his distribution and goal-kicking, which brought 14 points, thus ensuring a comfortable margin of victory.

"The rugby we played today was of an exceptional standard," said Stransky who, with experience of the Super 12 series, ought to know. "There was a lot of tension and niggly stuff out there but we held up pretty well and the guys responded when they needed to. Our forwards were hard and committed and that gave us a fantastic advantage."

Stransky's acquaintance with pacy, direct rugby behind a driving Springbok pack translated smoothly in the Leicester context, allowing him to establish excellent rapport with the open-side Neil Back and to bring the centres Greenwood and Potter into meaningful action from early on. It was no surprise that Greenwood twice, Potter, Hackney and Back, with a solo chip-and-charge, all crossed the line in confident style.

● St Helens gave one of their finest performances of recent times when they beat Wigan 26-12 in the fourth round of Rugby League's Silk Cut Challenge Cup, at Knowsley Road on Saturday. Reduced to 12 men for the whole of the second half after skipper Bobbie Goulding was dismissed for an assault on Neil Cowie, St Helens not only denied Wigan a sniff of a try but engineered three touchdowns for themselves.

WBO/IBF world featherweight title

# Hamed simply world-class

**John Rawling**

**THE Prince has been crowned King. Naseem Hamed's eight-round destruction of Tom Johnson at the London Arena on Saturday was so complete, so masterful, that Hamed is entitled to be regarded as the No 1 featherweight in the world.**

**His stunning victory added Johnson's IBF belt to the WBO version of the title he already held. Those fight fans who were bleary-eyed after staying up to witness the Lewis-McCall farce, were revitalised by the bout. Hamed was quite electrifying.**

**Johnson, aged 32, had been a fine champion for four years. He showed enough skill and bravery to ensure his opponent was thoroughly pushed. The key to the outcome was Hamed's power.**

**A third-round blitz from the 5ft 3in Sheffield fighter almost ended matters, as Hamed tried to fulfil a pre-fight promise to his mother that the contest would end there. But a marvellous right by Johnson shortly before the bell brought the experienced American back into the contest.**

**Most experts had predicted a quick finish but by the halfway stage Johnson had worked his way back, using his neat boxing skills. But his senses were scrambled once more in the seventh as Hamed cut loose.**

**When the end came Johnson was almost out on his feet and fell into a blistering right uppercut which left him on the canvas. Astonishingly, the old warrior got up at nine, but the referee wisely called a halt.**

**On the same bill, Dubliner Steve Collins, who had the early years of his fight career in the United States, out-punched Frédéric Seillier before opening cuts on the Frenchman's face to retain his WBO super-middleweight title in the fifth round.**

**Meanwhile Robin Reid, the muscular Liverpudlian who holds the WBC version of the super-middleweight title, was too big and strong for South African middleweight champion Giovanni Pretorius, who succumbed to the Briton in the seventh round.**

**Sports Diary** Shiv Sharma

# United undone by the Dons

MANCHESTER United will not be making a record fourth successive FA Cup appearance at Wembley later this year. The holders were bundled out of the competition by Wimbledon in the fourth-round replay at Selhurst Park last week.

A 64th-minute goal by Marcus Gayle was enough to beat Alex Ferguson's team and earn Wimbledon a fifth-round tie at home to Queens Park Rangers. United's neighbours, Manchester City, won their FA Cup tie against Watford, 3-1.

Also through to the next round are Leeds United, who beat Arsenal 1-0 at Highbury, and Chesterfield who defeated Bolton 3-2. Wrexham made further progress by beating Peterborough 4-2 while Coventry brought Woking's highly successful run to a close with a 2-1 victory over the Vauxhall Conference side.

BRITISH soccer will soon undergo a technical revolution if radical proposals to be put before the Football Association later this month are accepted.

Under the scheme, an electronic tag would be attached to each players and a metal coating fixed inside the cover of the ball. A metal grid under the entire pitch would pick up the positions of ball and players using radio waves. The positions would then be relayed to a computer in the stand where an official would analyse the 23 moving dots on the screen to judge instantly whether a player is offside.

The idea is recommended in a report prepared for the Football Association by Professor Nigel Allinson of the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. It envisages four other innovations becoming commonplace at top football grounds before the millennium. These include linking the referee's watch electronically to a stadium clock, so that the fans know how much stoppage time is being played, and the placing of an electronic gadget in the goalposts to decide whether the ball has crossed the line.

AUSTRALIAN doubles partners Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde ended France's brief grip on the Davis Cup with victory in the decisive doubles game in their World Group first round tie in Sydney.

Sandon Stolle then went on to beat Cedric Pioline of France 7-6, 6-4 before Arnold Boetsch prevented the whitewash by fighting back from a set down to win on a tie break 4-6, 6-4, 7-6.

SNOOKER star Steve Davis recovered from 8-4 down to beat Ronnie O'Sullivan 10-8 in the Benson & Hedges Masters final at Wembley Conference Centre on Sunday, to win his first title for two years.

BRUNO Kernen gave Switzerland its first Alpine skiing World Championship gold medal in four years when he recorded a shock victory in the men's downhill event at Sestriere, Italy. At the same venue, Norway's Kjetil-Andre Aamodt secured the men's combined gold medal with a total time of 3min 10.40sec. It was the fourth gold medal of his career.